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Evangelistic Preaching

With Sermon Outlines and Talks
to Children and Young People

By

OZORA S. DAVIS

President Chicago Theological Seminary

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Preface

THE Christian Church in the modern world is still charged, as it always has been, with one supreme task, publishing a message which is concerned with nothing less than a new life for the individual and society. There are many ways by which this message may be made known; but from the beginning it has been chiefly through the oral delivery of the evangel that it has been proclaimed. Christian preaching is still the compelling engagement of the Church. The preacher is still the messenger of life to his generation. Preaching is difficult, highly technical and glorious business. There seems to be need of a brief manual which will define again the unchanged task of the preacher in the light of our exacting and bewildered world, bring out the encouragements in the preacher's task, and offer practical suggestions for the prosecution of that distinct kind of preaching commonly known as evangelistic. This book is offered as a word of encouragement and specific counsel to all those who are toiling to publish the good news of the Kingdom of God and the new life in Christ.

O. S. D.

Chicago Theological Seminary.

Contents

PART I

THE THEORY OF EVANGELISTIC PREACHING

I.	THE GOOD NEWS AND ITS PUBLICATION .	9
II.	PREACHING AND THE PREACHER . . .	22
III.	THE IMPRESSION AND EXPRESSION OF THE GOOD NEWS	35
IV.	EVERY PREACHER AN EVANGELIST . . .	48
V.	THE EVANGELISTIC SERMON	61
VI.	EVANGELISM AS THE ORGANIZING PRIN- CIPLE IN PREACHING	78

PART II

A PROGRAM OF EVANGELISTIC PREACH- ING, WITH SERMON OUTLINES .	85
--	----

PART III

TALKS TO CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE	197
---	-----

PART IV

SPECIAL GATHERINGS	215
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PART I

The Theory of Evangelistic
Preaching

I

THE GOOD NEWS AND ITS PUBLICATION

ONCE upon a time there broke upon the yearning ear of humanity a message that was so timely, so assuring, so comforting that it was well named "the good news." It was not good news in general; it was specifically and forever unique; it was *the* good news. For every man, for all mankind, during all the years down to the end of time, whatever that may be, and under all human circumstances, however these may change, it remains the same exhaustless and wonderful message.

The men who first heard it and put it into words spoke Greek and they gave a name to the message, which passed into Latin letters and then came to us in the English word "evangel." From this we derived the kindred words "evangelistic" and "evangelize." Then from another source, our own Anglo-Saxon, came the word "gospel," shorter and more vital, meaning the same thing, "good news."

How swiftly and surely words lose their pristine and pictorial meaning! Like coins abraded by

constant handling, our great words have the images rubbed off and the sharp lines in which they were originally minted smoothed down. So we have lost to a great extent the precious and vivid content of the word "gospel." We must use our imagination and picture once more the clear scene that is involved in some of the great terms of our language. Here is the situation out of which the word *gospel* was born. A battle is being fought by the defenders of a city on a field far from the walls where the people who cannot take their part in the conflict wait and long for news. The old men are there and the women and the little children. They are straining their eyes as they watch the road; they are listening with every sense attent. Now out of the dust, far off, appears the figure of a runner. He is bending every nerve to reach the city gates, for he is the messenger of good news. The battle has been won and the city is saved. To make that fact known is worth the utmost effort that he can put forth. He knows what it will mean to the waiting people; so he spares no energy to tell them the good news.

The word "evangelist" represents this messenger. And the news that he brings is the "evangel," or the good news. The Christian preacher is the evangelist or the bearer of good news to all the yearning and beleaguered souls of men. The message that he brings them is his gospel or evangel. It tells how the love of God has enlisted on

man's side in the struggle for truth and righteousness. It has the accent of certainty about it. This is not a guess; it is an affirmation that grounds itself in the deepest assurance. It has the ring of joy about it. The message is sure to set the bells ringing. If the messenger is so enthusiastic about it that he pours all his soul into the announcement of his message, if sometimes he breaks over the conventional forms in his proclamation, we are not surprised. We would be surprised if he did not do something of this sort. Who could possibly tell men such truth without emotion? The message is so wonderful, so important, so packed with joy!

This is the earliest and the most vital content of the word. But the years go by. The message is repeated again and again, until the very words are worn thin. Men begin to change the message from a glad announcement to a fixed dogma. They quarrel about it. They even kill each other because they cannot agree on the meaning of the words or the words themselves. The form in which the announcement of the good news is to be given is stereotyped into what is called a "sermon." A science of sermon structure and delivery grows up; it bears the dismal name "homiletics." The sermon is subjected to the critical treatment of literary composition and oral address, and is forced to conform to the canons of the science with this hard name. How can we keep the kindling beauty

and the radiant joy of the pristine good news, brought by the messenger on the run, under such conditions? You cannot conventionalize and standardize a thing of beauty and joy and spontaneous expression like this and keep it in its genuine and primitive form. The preacher, who is simply the messenger or the evangelist, must fight all the time to preserve the native meaning of his words as he uses them. He must constantly use his imagination and his reason in order to vitalize the terms that he uses, his thought of his own task and the truth that he gives to his comrades in the act of preaching. We have almost forgotten what these great words "gospel," "evangelize," and "preach" do actually mean. It is not merely the people who have lost this clear conception; but the very preachers themselves have suffered the great words to become hazy and inert in their thinking. This word "gospel" is a noble, living word.

There are many statements of the Gospel. Some are brief and some are long. Some are simple and some are technical. No one is quite complete. Even when they are united in one great, comprehensive definition, there are factors that are left out. The good news is so wide in its reach and so deep in its intention, it is so full of vast and varied meaning, it is so rich and fertile in its daring affirmation that we cannot pack it all into a proposition. One of the most satisfactory of the early statements, because it was made by a man whose

personal Christian experience was deep and genuine, is as follows:

“ But all things are of God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and gave unto us the ministry of reconciliation; to wit, that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not reckoning unto them their trespasses, and having committed to us the word of reconciliation ” (2 Cor. 5: 18, 19).

As we reflect upon this passage we cannot fail to catch its exalted vision and searching imperative. It surely matches the temper which we found in the earliest figure of the Gospel and the evangelist. There is the reflection of the runner's urgency and the people's expectation. Then there is something courtly and imperial about it. An ambassador is not a little man fussing with a little job. He is not running errands or concerned with pettiness. He is the representative of his monarch. He stands in the place of his nation or his race. When he speaks the voice of the people is heard. When he affirms something the power of a great corporation is behind him. This matter of publishing the Gospel is royal business, dignified by the weight of regal authority, and demanding the utmost power of a trained and consecrated personality. It may call for deliberate effort of the mind and imagination in order that a Christian preacher to-day may catch the practical significance of this thought; but it is most legitimate for

him to seek to vitalize the idea in his daily work. If he will do so he will find that the old tasks are lighted up with new beauty and his whole work is dignified and ennobled.

The word "reconciliation" is a noble one. It means to bring together, to harmonize, to overcome estrangement. As we look either into our own hearts or abroad into the world in which we must live so long as God has work for us to do, we know that there are discords and estrangements which ought to be set right. Division and anguish lie all around us. We cannot be permanently happy or do good work under such conditions. The world is not right. The soul demands that it shall be made right. The nobler the human spirit, the more urgent and insistent is its demand for unity. This demand is not manufactured from without; it arises from within the human spirit at its best. We do not need to be educated in order to reason this matter out. We cry out instinctively for a universe that is harmonized and happy in love and good will. The most stupendous and glorious enterprise that ever has commanded the mind and the active powers of man is the program of the Kingdom of God, which is the substance of the Gospel of Christ. All dreams of Utopia, all programs for social betterment, are less than the message of a reconciled world in Jesus Christ.

The reconciliation is not a change wrought in the nature of God. That changeless love did not

call for any new yearning. The old father in the parable of the lost boy did not require a change of heart while his eager eyes were peering down the road hoping to see the loved figure of the returning prodigal. But the boy needed to be changed; and love was the only power that ever could do that. The good news comes with such mighty appeal that it does actually change our hearts.

But the reconciliation that the good news proclaims is not simply between man and God; it is also and most gloriously between man and man. Out of new and right relations with God flow inevitably a whole world of new relations between man and man. Indeed, it begins with nature itself. We seldom think that the Gospel has any bearing upon the relation which man bears to the physical world; but under the sway of the Gospel all nature comes into closer relations with man and man with nature. A Christian is kinder to his animals; he works harder and so gets a larger return from his farm; good will is something that even the fields and flocks understand. Then a new set of social principles unfolds from the publishing and accepting of the good news. Set the Gospel at work in the worst moral conditions of a great city and it will transform vileness into beauty. Men under the sway of the Gospel begin to adjust themselves to one another in a new spirit of sacrifice and service. It is an actual reconcilia-

tion wrought out in concrete forms of mutual aid.

The publication of a message so searching and comprehensive calls for all the resources of the herald, trained in the highest possible degree. It must be sung and written and printed and preached. Every possible agency of publication must be utilized to make so glorious a message known. No form of announcement may be overlooked; new forms must be searched out and utilized. So the message must be put into word and action, into spirit and program. One friend must tell another about it, as they did in the beginning with exuberant and convincing joy. This is the simplest way in which to give publicity to the good news. But this method is too slow. The Gospel must be brought to many men and women at a time; and the only way in which this can be done is by printing and preaching. The press is a great pulpit whose service to the publication of the Gospel is immeasurable. Books and periodicals spread the message far and wide. Every language used by men must be employed in order that the races may hear the message "each in his own tongue." And then the assembly must be utilized, with the living speaker present, to use the greatest of all agencies ever employed to make truth known, namely a living man speaking home to the heart of living men.

This is preaching. It is the one method that has been used most effectively from the beginning to

make the good news known to men. It is not an isolated act. It is carried on as a part of an order or service of public worship. The preacher is also the man who leads people in social worship near to God and to one another. It is inevitable that as the centuries have passed and men of many races and civilizations have stated the good news over and over, preaching has grown somewhat complex and formal. But it never has fallen into a period of formality and lifelessness without the final appearance of prophetic men who have rescued it and brought it back to its place of primacy and power. And thus the method of preaching has vindicated its right and authority as the chief means of publishing the good news. As a matter of fact whenever there has been strong preaching the Gospel is found to be exerting its strongest influence in the life of the age. With the decline of preaching there has inevitably resulted the falling off of the energy of the Gospel in its command over the people. And the restoration of the good news to its supremacy has been invariably wrought by the power of preaching. The Christian people have trusted this method as the one most certain to make the good news known. There have been times of criticism and disparagement; but the final verdict always has been in favour of preaching.

The present is such a time. Preaching is asked to furnish its credentials. Let us meet the challenge. We are sometimes told that we must return

to the simple apostolic method of personal and individual contact, by which the knowledge of the Gospel was spread from person to person by the contagion of friendship and through the medium of conversation. One disciple of Christ will bring another to the common Master and so the good news will be passed along until finally the whole world will hear the message. The persuasive power of individual appeal from friend to friend is certainly a mighty influence in extending any cause. All this the advocate of the medium of preaching as the agency for publishing the good news recognizes and defends. Personal testimony is now, however, as it was when Jesus lived among His earthly friends, the greatest single agency for extending the knowledge of the good news. The preacher standing in his pulpit and publishing the Gospel to a congregation is only a witness influencing many comrades at once instead of one at a time. Preaching is simply the extension of personal testimony by adding to the number of hearers. Also the larger contact of the individual preacher with the group of hearers does not exclude the individual in contact with the individual. On the contrary, the most successful preachers of the Gospel to large audiences have also been the strongest advocates of "individual work for individuals," knowing that the two methods are the necessary complements to each other.

We are sometimes urged to lay less stress upon

preaching in the interests of publicity for the Gospel through pictorial illustration, printing and the distribution of literature. Printing has been brought to such a high degree of efficiency as the means of all kinds of publicity, especially if pictorial illustration be included with it, that it can be used more than ever before to make any set of facts or truths widely known. And it is being employed in every sort of propaganda. But at best utterance through the press lacks that which is most powerful in preaching, the person himself speaking, and that richest of all instruments ever devised for the expression of truth and its impression upon others, the human voice. Widely as the press is used, the promoters of all movements unite in their testimony to the superior power of the personal advocate or pleader and are constantly thus representing their causes in public meetings. In the sermon the preacher adds himself to his message; he therefore has the force of the spoken sentences plus his own energy and influence. And the paramount factor in the publication of the Gospel is the convinced and convincing preacher himself. So preaching still maintains its supremacy as the means of publishing the Gospel. It uses the press in every possible way; but it still trusts the kindling word of the preacher supremely.

Another claim merits consideration at this point. Many earnest and sincere critics of preaching demand that the Gospel shall be published and com-

mended wholly by the deeds that it inspires. They point out the convincing power of conduct and say truly that the good news is approved by the fact that it makes good men. They are impatient with so much theory and debate; they long for the practical proof of the Gospel. The protest is healthy and desirable. The power of Christian conduct and the testimony of Christian life and character in bringing knowledge of the good news to the world and leading men to accept it are unbounded. We must be on guard against trusting the mere words of the Gospel, apart from their confirmation in life, to avail in extending the knowledge of the good news to the end of its redemptive mission. The searching question of Jesus in Luke 6:46 must be borne constantly in mind:

“Why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?”

Thus the testimony of conduct is convincing and it must be constantly brought into action; but it is immediately apparent that the Christian character is the result and the confirmation of hearing the Christian Gospel. Publication of the truth must precede both the knowledge of the truth and action according to it. Preaching, therefore, is the necessary preliminary to the proof of the Gospel that is furnished by life and character.

Therefore we conclude that the effective publication of the good news depends upon continuous

and ever improved preaching. The modern preacher will not need to spend any time questioning the validity of his credentials. They have been confirmed by almost twenty centuries of experience. He will study rather how he can improve his methods and make his sermons more vital and convincing. If he discerns clearly the import of his message and the sources of power in his work he will be sure that the one supreme factor in successful preaching is to make the sermon a gospel, that is, a real message laden with the prophet's sense of "burden." No skill in form or grace in speech can take the place of this quality in the sermon. It must be dominantly evangelistic, that is, true in spirit and explicit in statement so that it will publish in some fuller form and more convincing appeal the good news of the reconciliation in Christ.

II

PREACHING AND THE PREACHER

AS preaching has gone on from century to century it has inevitably become complex. It has developed a technique and certain standards have gradually been established. But the outstanding factor in it all is, as it always has been, the personality of the preacher. That is what makes the sermon so radically different from the essay or the scientific lecture. The writer's personality is not apparent in the essay or poem. In the lecture the subject dominates everything. But in the sermon the man speaking is so central and potent that in a certain sense *the sermon is the man*. The sermon is truth passing through the preacher's personal experience, interpreted by it and enforced by it. He imputes himself in all his statements. This is why the hearer so often cannot tell at the end so much in detail what he has heard; even the text may be lost soon from his memory; but he is sure that on a certain occasion he saw a man who was so sure of a truth which he was ardent to impart that he spent his very self in making it clear and forceful. This point may appear more clearly if we analyze briefly the elements that enter into preaching.

The earliest Christian preaching was simple, positive testimony. Turn to the "sermon" of Peter reported in Acts 2: 14-36. In the strict sense of the word, as it has developed its full meaning in the course of time, this is not a sermon. It is primarily the giving of testimony. Peter and his comrades had seen and known something; they told others about it. There was no wavering in their minds. They went into the witness-box and gave their evidence clearly and with complete assurance. They were not primarily interested in argument. They wanted to tell what they knew. Their testimony was so definite, so clear, so convincing that hundreds and thousands believed the message on the ground of their witness. Men could not help believing the witness of experience then; they cannot fail to accept it now. Straight-forward affirmation, on the ground of something that is positively sure in the experience of some one else always carries conviction.

This is a permanent factor in preaching. The modern preacher will not often cast his evidence into sentences whose subject is the first personal pronoun. That does not mean that his sermon will not be based on testimony. His consciousness of the fact that he is a witness will form the background of all his thought. It will charge the preparation of his sermon with the temper and accent of affirmation. He may not say the words aloud as he works; but his mind will all the time be de-

claring stoutly, *This is true; I know it; I have proved it.* We often ask why so many sermons seem to be weak in their appeal and why a minister is sometimes languid in his work. It is primarily because the sermon does not ring with the accent of confidence and the minister has not confirmed his message in his own experience before he announced it in the pulpit. The good news is still good news. When the preacher is more sure of this than he is of any other fact he will fill his sermon with happy and whole-hearted testimony to the truth which has found him and by which he is himself living victoriously.

Testimony, however, soon passed into another stage of development in early preaching. As men were convinced of the truth in the good news of reconciliation in Christ they discovered that they had entered into a life and experience of such range and richness that they needed to spend all their lives in learning what was involved in the good news. Thus arose the ministry of *teaching*. When any one entered into the life of personal loyalty to Christ he understood why the earliest followers of the Master were called disciples or "learners." He discovered that when he accepted the ruling motives of Jesus and made them his the whole world required re-valuation. The matter could not be understood in a day. He must ask those who knew more than he to tell him what they had learned and known. He must try to state the great

truth to his own mind and to the intelligence of others. That is, the whole truth as found in Christ must be deeply studied; a new kind of experience, briefly described as the experience of God in Christ, must be interpreted and given some kind of an orderly statement so that others could understand and appropriate it. This involved teaching in its amplest form and its deepest import.

Teaching is still an integral part of the preacher's work. This does not mean that the sermon is a lecture. It is something distinct and decidedly more. Yet every sermon has in it to some extent a teaching purpose. The good news calls for proclamation; but it also must be expressed in many forms and therefore instruction is essential to the full preaching of the Gospel. Therefore the preacher himself must be a clear thinker and a hard worker in the field of Christian theology. It is quite common for ministers to fall in with the current disparagement of theology. But what his appropriate science is to the botanist, the astronomer or the social worker, that theology is to the preacher. It is the systematic statement of the comprehensive truth in the good news. This must be not only an object of respect but a subject of study on the part of the preacher. It is no sign of superiority or cleverness to affirm that one is innocent of the great science which has claimed the love and loyalty of many of the greatest minds of the world. The preacher must know how to

teach as well as to exhort. He still must be "apt to teach." We shall discuss this more fully in Chapter V.

There is still another factor in the process of preaching for which it is difficult to find a name. Perhaps the best word to use is *passion*. Preaching is a flame, an insight, a forth-telling. It lays hold of the deeps within us and it speaks to the deeps in others. It is a something that suffers and yearns and trembles. This is the element in preaching that least admits of formal treatment or stable classification. It is reckless in a certain sense. It breaks out into new forms. It defies the laws that we lay down. It occasionally uses the unusual form of the sermon with such power that it seems as if the way had been found at last to proclaim the Gospel with utter success; and then some one else tries to do the same thing and fails miserably. Thus there is something elusive in the great mood which we cannot classify or confine. Under the spell of the prophetic mood the preacher does not think or feel so much as he *sees*. He finds that his mind is rushing under the thrust or drive of a power that he dimly understands but in response to which he feels great joy and power. He has attained the open vision and arrived at the direct grasp of truth. The vagueness of this description grows out of the elusiveness of the subject; but every preacher knows the reality and power of this elevation of spirit and release of in-

tellectual and emotional energy under the influence of the impassioned glow of insight.

We know that this experience came to the prophets. It is written large in the precious remains of their words and work. It is easy to discern it in the personality of Isaiah. When it comes to ourselves and our modern world we are less ready to believe that we, in our plain pulpit, among the people who know us so well, may know the lift and glory of the prophetic insight and power to proclaim what we have seen. We need not doubt it, however. We cannot ring up this royal servant and have him wait on us at command. There are no known methods by which to force the advent of lofty vision and flaming speech. This is an angel visitor. There are certain ways, however, in which we may so prepare for his royal coming that he may not be delayed through any fault of ours. Jesus showed what these are in His wonderful promise, "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God." We cannot perform mechanical exercises that will insure the coming of the holy passion. But we can keep our hearts gentle and our souls keyed to good will. Then at least the flame will not be blown out. This is the prophetic glow and leap which makes preaching, under its sway, the noblest, happiest engagement which can command the spirit of man.

Thus it will be seen that the task of preaching is not the simple work that it might appear at first

sight to be. It is necessary not only to have all the factors that enter into the complex action present, but also to have them preserved in their right balance. A sermon must not be too dogmatic, too didactic, too emotional. It must be like a symphony, balanced and controlled in full and chastened harmony.

The chief factor, however, is the personality of the preacher. The truth must be transmitted *through* personality. We have repeated this so often because the truth is so often forgotten. The conviction and experience of the preacher are both absolutely necessary to the true sermon and to effective preaching. Therefore at this point arises the great question, How deeply has the preacher himself experienced the transforming power of the Gospel? And on the basis of this experience how valid and tenacious is his faith in the power of the Gospel to do for others and for the whole world what it has done for him? It is immediately apparent that this involves something more than an intellectual assent to a set of propositions. The kind of confidence which we are now discussing arises from the consent of a man's whole being to something which he has tried and found true in his daily life. The multiplication table never stood by him with help when he was in danger of being caught by evil; it never comforted him when he was sorely stricken with grief. But the Gospel has done all this and more for any man who preaches

it with power.) As Rev. Albert J. Lyman, himself a great preacher, said, "Preaching is not only an 'art'; it is an 'incarnation.'" When the Gospel actually lives in a man then he can preach a living gospel. The man who himself knows the redemptive love and power of Christ will never need to question his credentials. That which the good news has done for him he knows it will do for other men. His message has not lost its power and his Master still lives.

Therefore preparation for Christian preaching is as wide and deep as the preacher's life; indeed, it is essentially just this, the preparation of the preacher himself. On the academic side it involves the severest and most constant thought and study. No greater mistake could be made than to disparage or discontinue study and reflection and constructive thought. One of the reasons why ministers fail and evangelists do not "last" is because they have stopped thinking and taken to shouting. These are harsh words; but the situation warrants them. Any preacher who thinks that he can be safe and not use all his mental powers to their highest degree has signed his own resignation letter in advance. The Christian pulpit in America to-day needs a mighty revival of clear, fearless and continuous study and thought. It is a tragedy to see a minister go to seed mentally.

Then there is the emotional culture of personality which is imperative if the good news is to be

given with power. The message is beautiful. So is the life that it inspires. Too often the preacher becomes so engrossed with the details of his work that he fails to lay his spirit open to the loveliness of the universe. The preacher's life is a quest for beauty. All ugly things must be left out so far as they are not necessary to the service that he must render to his community and generation. To give space to mean and petty ideas and purposes in life is to make ourselves dusty attics where spiders spin instead of the sunny rooms where all beauty is present with love and joy. We must not fail to love loveliness if we are to preach a gospel that is concerned with the beauty of holiness.

On the public and social side of the preacher's life must be cultivated the widest range of sympathy and deepest relation with all aspects of our bewildering modern life. The good news is a social message. It comes into intimate relations with every phase of human endeavour. The preacher cannot give his message with success unless deeply and honestly he loves "folks" and is glad to enter into their loves and sorrows with true appreciation. The term "good mixer" has been over-worn; but it still represents one of the most important characteristics of the preacher. He cannot stand in his high church steeple to throw down the truth one day in seven. The measure of his happy and helpful mingling with men is the degree of his effectiveness as an ambassador of Christ.

Therefore the culture of the social sympathies and graces of manner is imperative.

All these are less, however, than the one dominant factor in the preparation of the preacher, which is the real preparation of the sermon. We return to its discussion. Preaching is a personal message. No spring will rise higher than its source. The message must have behind it the preacher's absolutely genuine and moving personal experience of the reality and power of the Gospel. The Gospel has something to do in the life and for the character of the preacher himself before he is prepared to do his best work in the publication of the good news as the messenger of his Master.

The objection is often met at this point: How can one who has grown up in a Christian home and has never passed through the radical change of an experience of "conversion," as it is generally described in the language of the mission hall, have this keen sense of the message and the urgency of the Gospel. It cannot be manufactured.

The only reply to this is something as follows: The external conditions of the experience of conversion are manifold. There are the deep and revolutionary changes: there are the equally deep but evolutionary changes. It is possible to turn around by swinging through so wide a circle so gradually that one is unconscious of the slow change of direction. It is also possible to turn around at such an acute angle that everything is

upset. If any one who has come into the Christian life by the gradual processes of Christian nurture will carefully revive his memories and make an inventory of his experiences he will find that he comes out just where the subject of the more sudden and dramatic change arrives. Both are conscious of a personal loyalty and a glowing love for Christ, the Saviour and Lord. So there is no exception to the statement that preachers of both types of experience have the basis laid for their preaching in the fact that there has been something done for them of supreme value by the Gospel.

Therefore every Christian preacher must repeatedly search his own soul and cultivate his own inner life with Christ in God. If that fails all "methods" will be utterly futile. Nothing can be learned out of a book or in a conference that will take the place of this personal experience and conviction. The true sermon does not come into being under the study lamp alone. It derives its life and power from the deep wells of the preacher's profound knowledge of the reality of the Gospel as he unites his life with Christ in loving surrender and happy service.

Let us look at the matter once more. Here is the world in bondage to sin and held under captivity to injustice, hate and lust. Is there anything that can emancipate this world from the horrible situation in which it is involved? The Gospel of Christ claims to be able to do just this and to do it

successfully whenever it is tried. The preacher is supposed to believe this—to believe it to the tips of his toes, with such utter faith that he is willing to pledge his whole life to the truth of the proposition. Do we believe it? The doctor trusts his remedy. The surgeon believes in his operation. An advocate has confidence in the justice of his cause. Is the preacher “dead sure” of his message? It is charged that the modern pulpit is remote from life and that much preaching is perfunctory. If this is so, what is the reason? Lack of blazing conviction on the part of the preacher, first of all. As the preacher looks into his own heart, into the needy lives of the people in the parish, into the nation and abroad into the vast world, he must be sure, beyond any hesitation or doubt, absolutely sure, that he has the message and the power that will bring man and God, and man and man perfectly together. This Gospel, the modern preacher must know as clearly as Paul knew it, is the very “power of God.” When he reaches that point he is the master of his pulpit, at least so far as the initial energy for his work is concerned. He must do more than merely to be sure of this. He must yearn and pray and toil terribly. But he cannot, he simply cannot, fail in the end because he is working with the unvanquished and unconquerable purposes of God.

Every preacher knows what it is to have his life grow stale and to see the visions fade. Then it is

time to come back and to renew convictions and certainties in a fresh experience of the Gospel. Think it through; respond to it with the glow of a deep affection; do something with it by means of a practical program. Preachers must let the Gospel do more for them in order that they may do more for the Gospel. When the truth has wrought in us we shall be able to "energize" well in the community for the truth. Open your life more fully to the influence of Christ by putting all evil and selfish thoughts out of it. The more we think about Him, study His teaching, imagine Him as He actually lived with men, and, chiefly, as we yield ourselves to His service, the more we shall be brought into an experience of Christ's reality and power that will fortify us in our moments of weakness and give us a message and a conviction against which no attack of denial or scorn will be able to prevail.

III

THE IMPRESSION AND EXPRESSION OF THE GOOD NEWS

FOUR phases of the process of preaching we shall study briefly in this chapter. They must be understood in their right relations by any one who is to preach the good news successfully in the modern age.

The first is the impression of the good news upon the preacher. This has been considered at such length in the previous chapter that we only revert to it again here. The Gospel must have made a deep impression upon the whole life of the preacher before he can effectively impress it upon others. It must be the greatest truth he knows, the noblest engagement to which he can possibly dedicate himself. Thus the Gospel must have been impressed upon his very spirit. It must have laid hold on the deepest springs of his action; it must be translated into motives; it must shape the major program of the preacher's life. No man who goes into the pulpit merely because he is interested in what he is going to do or say there, or because he enjoys the music, or because he likes the stately order of a

service, will be a preacher. But something must have been impressed upon him so deeply that he is under the spell of its mighty urgency and feels that he absolutely *must* do something about it. There lies the source of his power. It is the drive and the compulsion derived from a commanding truth. It is no ground for boasting or claim to glory when a man upon whom the good news has been so deeply and vitally impressed seeks to preach it, or to express it. Indeed, he could not do anything else and be true to the deepest that is in him. Paul states this fact in one of those little revelations of himself that he gives occasionally in his letters: "For if I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of; for necessity is laid upon me; for woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel" (1 Cor. 9: 16).

Therefore we pass to the expression of the good news by the preacher. *He must do it.* There is no option about it on his part. When he is once sure that here is something that has the power in it to save the world he cannot be either quiet or calm about it. But note the source of the urgency. It is not in response to a command laid upon him from without by a Sovereign that the preacher publishes the good news. His constraint is from within. It springs from his convictions and his love. As Peter and John put it at the very beginning of the days of Christian testimony, "Whether it is right in the sight of God to hearken unto you

rather than unto God, judge ye: for we cannot but speak the things which we saw and heard " (Acts 4: 19, 20).

The impression made by Christ upon a disciple to-day is not produced as it was in the days of His flesh by contacts in the realm of physical life. It is none the less personal and real. While it is true that the vast majority of our impressions are received through the physical organs, there are many which come to us in delicate and subtle ways. Christ is living in our world. He is near us. He touches us. Whittier was not writing something that had no actual meaning to him when he sang:

" We touch Him in life's throng and press,
And we are whole again."

The expression of this experience is a great and beautiful and rewarding task. Preaching is not an engagement to be treated lightly. When a citizen of the United States is appointed ambassador to Great Britain he does not esteem it an empty honour. It is a high privilege. It calls out the best that is in him. He goes to the court of Great Britain conscious of his responsibility and prepared to represent his country well.

No less a sense of joy and privilege should mark the temper and the work of the ambassador of Christ to the community where he preaches. This is not mere rhetoric. It is solid fact and there are thousands of preachers, from the day of St. Paul

to this very moment, who have proved the reality and power of this conception of the preacher's life and work.

But let us not shut up the expression of the good news to the sermon alone. That would be to deny the value of some of the chief agencies for publishing the good news. The whole order of worship is the affirmation of the Gospel. There is not a single item of the service that fails in some way to set forth or emphasize some fact in the message. Scripture, hymns, prayers, offerings, all unite to express the good news to the people. And yet when all this is admitted, it remains clear that the sermon itself is the chief form of expression into which the preacher casts his message.

Yet there is a determining background that we must not fail to appreciate. It is the whole spirit of the preacher. There is something magnetic, as it were, about one who is giving oral expression to a truth. And if he believes it, if he is wholly sure of it, there will be a sort of confirmatory bearing about him which the people will discern and which will help his message in ways that he never will know. For somehow the truths that we do believe through and through get a sort of audience even when we express them poorly. And when they are set forth in clear and cogent fashion the conviction with which we hold the truth we declare takes on added strength.

Therefore the modern preacher will work with

every possible medium in order that he may express the message clearly. He will study the proposition of his sermon until it is clear as daylight to his mind. It is said that the secret of Lincoln's power with a jury lay in the clearness with which he addressed his plea to them. In preparing for this it was his custom to reduce his case to a series of propositions. Every one of these he went over again and again until there was not an unnecessary or meaningless word in a sentence. He imagined himself in the place of the jury and convinced himself first of all. He arranged his propositions until they were so ordered that they led from one to another and reached a convincing climax. This persuasive outline was filled out as the occasions demanded; but it was back there as the supporting skeleton of his plea and he never regarded as lost the time and diligent study put upon it.

The preacher will work hard on his literary expression of the good news. The right and beautiful word is necessary to clothe the clear thought. We are sometimes told that the preacher may trust the Lord to fill his mouth if only he will open it. But on the whole it is the man who has studied hardest and worked most diligently whom the Lord can use best as His messenger. The English language is too noble and rich to be treated with the dishonour to which some preachers subject it. It is the instrument for the oral expression of the

good news and it ought to be handled with more care than the astronomer bestows upon his telescope.

And in the same way the preacher will be careful and earnest in the use he makes of every item of the service. Even the little details of his own dress and manner are important in order that there may be nothing but commendation for his message deriving from the whole effort to deliver it. Hymns that harmonize with the service are demanded, not merely for the artistic finish of it, but because through them some phase of the good news will be expressed.

We come next to the impression of the message upon the group or the congregation. This opens up a whole new field of study which sometime will be carried out to a still greater degree of thoroughness; we have only made a beginning in our study of the psychological factors involved in preaching. As we come to know more of the way in which the minds of many individuals react or respond to an appeal to a group rather than to an individual, we shall learn better how to preach the Gospel in such a way that it will be forcefully impressed upon the people.

There are certain principles, however, which are clear and which the messenger of the good news can use with skill to increase the impressive power of his gospel. Among those principles are the following:

The message must be of such a character and it must be given in such a way that it will make connections with that which the hearers already know and fit in with that which they are already doing. Otherwise it will be so remote from them that they will see no meaning in it all, or else will regard it only as interesting theory but will not adjust it to their habitual activities. This is what we call either *vital relation* or *remoteness*. And the Gospel sermon must not be remote from life; it must make vital connection with the real world where the people think and work. Preaching has been too much concerned with mansions in the skies and not enough with cottages on earth. All this must be changed.

Then the Gospel as a message of new life must be presented in such a way that it will not be unreasonable. It must be clear and appealing and have a strong factor of common sense in it. Hearers are often carried quite away by high flights of oratory. It is an interesting spectacle to watch a fervid speaker take a captive audience into camp. And it is painfully interesting to watch the slipping away of that enthusiasm and applause. Men often clap their hands at a big noise; they generally sit silently under the influence of great thoughts. There is no use shouting, either in the pulpit or "all over God's heaven," with the idea that it is going to make a deep impression on men. In the end it is the clear, sensible and strong mes-

sage that carries weight and drives home to the hearts of the people.

Then the *present value* of the message counts mightily in impressing the congregation. It is not easy to frighten or woo men and women to-day by telling them of the pains of hell or the bliss of heaven. Strong people are neither scared nor coaxed into the Church or the Kingdom of God nowadays. But men and women want something that will give them comfort and peace and joy while they are working hard and trying to find some reasonable explanation of the world which the vast majority are finding now just a little too big and hard for them to manage without some help from outside. Our Christian Gospel promises that help. When the message is put in that way the people like to hear it and they are respectful to the messenger. Let us always remember that the mission of Jesus was to the whole life of man here and hereafter. He seeks to save men from the sin that is destroying them in time as well as from the inevitable issue of those sins in eternity. This accent of present helpfulness and strength has been too much lost out of the preaching of the Christian pulpit. We must bring it back and set it before the congregations of the present day in all its charm and power. The Gospel is a message of new life to the world now.

Then there is another factor in preaching which we must always regard. The message which has

been impressed upon the preacher and expressed by him in a sermon that impresses the hearers is in turn to be expressed by them in new forms of individual and social action. We reckon too seldom with this fact, that the real end of the sermon is achieved in the working out of its truth in the practical activities of living men and women. The sermon which expresses the Gospel intends to get something done in the life of the individual and the community.

It is all expressed in that passage where the commas do such a lot of damage in Ephesians 4: 12. Paul says that Christ gave different gifts to the members of His body, the Church, and made some to be apostles, prophets, evangelists, prophets and teachers, "for the perfecting of the saints, unto the work of ministering, unto the building up of the body of Christ." And when we read those three phrases we are accustomed to regard them as the three coördinate aspects of the duties of church leaders. They are to perfect the saints and to do the ministering work of the congregation and to build up the body of Christ. But these are not co-ordinates. This is an ascending scale of activities. Church leaders—and just now we are thinking of the preacher preëminently—are to work to make the members able to do the service of the community in order that thereby the great fellowship of Christ on earth may be built up. Therefore the sermon is designed to be something more than a

part of the preacher's work; it is the definition of the congregation's community task.

Thus we have a new test of the value of the sermon. That is not a real sermon which has merely presented a phase of the Gospel so clearly that it has been made plain to the minds of the congregation. Nor is that a real sermon which has moved the people to a temporary elevation of feeling. But the true sermon convinces the mind, moves the emotions, and also gains such a decision of the hearer that the truth in the sermon becomes a new program for the daily life of the individual and for the community. The good news that has been impressed or driven home must be expressed or driven out into action in all the phases of the community life.

There has been much discussion of the individual and the social Gospel, as if there were some permanent contradiction between them. There is no more contradiction here than there is between the opposite sides of a "nickel" or the concave and convex sides of a crescent moon. Each is necessary to the other. It would be impossible to have the coin if there were not two sides to it. They complete one another. The crescent moon must be convex and it must be concave. We may admire one side more than the other; but we know that both sides are involved in the complete object.

So the expression of the truth in the sermon must be wrought out by the individual. The good

news becomes a ruling principle by which he shapes the program of his life. Occasionally we hear some one disparage the idea of "saving one's soul." We are told that this is selfish and quite unworthy business; that a man who is bent on saving his soul probably has a soul hardly worth saving. And there is urgent warning in the statement if one who is anxious about saving his soul thinks that he can accomplish his purpose in solitude. No man ever started out to save his own soul without finding that he could not reach his end without the help and encouragement of his comrades. There is no such thing as sheer individual salvation. Individual salvation demands the aid of the group in order to its accomplishment.

Or suppose we begin at the other side of the proposition and stress the social aspect of the good news. We make a beginning with the endeavour to work out a program for the community through which the Gospel will be realized in the life of the people. We have hardly taken the first step until we discover that nothing can be done unless we have at hand a growing number of individuals who are trying to save their own souls according to the plan of the Gospel of Jesus. (All kinds of most attractive schemes for community uplift have been devised and started into operation; but they have not gone far until they have failed. The plan was all right; but there was no driving energy behind the scheme.) Men and women who have

caught the spirit of Jesus and are ready to give themselves to the realization of His program as a vital part of the process of saving their own souls are the driving force behind all the practical efforts that will succeed in the redemption of the community.

The emphasis upon the social Gospel was timely and it ought never to be lost. There is no greater folly than to accomplish the "conversion" of an individual and then ask him, with all the struggle ahead of him as he seeks to realize his new resolution, to go back into surroundings where all the forces of the community will be at work against him rather than for him. In fact, the individual saves society and society saves the individual all the time, when each is engrossed in the process of working out the program of salvation which is brought to the world in the good news which the preacher publishes.

A wonderful sense of freedom is born in the preacher's mind and heart when he catches this harmony between these two phases of his message and knows that he is to speak to the individual and to the community, bringing to both a message of such mighty moulding power that it will shape to better conditions all the life of the generation. There is no other person in the community who has such a message; there is no other business in the community comparable with this. The preacher may have a small salary

and there may be many who disparage his work. But when the forces of the community are summed up according to their value in making for the highest life of all, the Christian preacher, vitalized by the consciousness of his wonderful and holy task, is the chief single agent in the whole body acting consistently to bring forth all the highest and best qualities in the individual and society and shaping it all according to the mighty ideal of the Kingdom of God. That man, endowed with that power and charged with that holy task, is the most important and commanding figure in the whole complex system of community life. He ought to preach with the conviction and power of a prophet for he is doing business with eternal things. He is the evangelist of God.

IV

EVERY PREACHER AN EVANGELIST

FROM the glimpses we gain of the early Christian Church it seems that there are several classes of recognized leaders, among whom are "evangelists" and "pastors and teachers." Also we know that the distinction between the travelling "missionary" and the established "pastor" has been recognized and realized with varying emphasis through the history of the Church.

The distinction between the *evangelist* and the *preacher-pastor* is clear and permanent. The evangelist has specialized in the publication of the message of the Gospel. He may not have a large number of sermons in readiness; but those he has have been prepared for the purpose of driving home the content of the Gospel as a message of new life to the souls of men. Then the evangelist is the student and the user of a technique of managing meetings, carrying on propaganda work and in many ways touching the community with the challenge of novelty that does not come so naturally into the work of the resident preacher and pastor. The evangelist is the promoter and the

preacher-pastor is the conserver. Both tasks are necessary and therefore honourable. But men of different gifts can discharge them with varying effectiveness. Each plays an important part in the publication of the Gospel.

But while we preserve this historic distinction and recognize the validity of the difference in the present functions of the two groups, the proposition still stands that every preacher-pastor is an evangelist. He preaches steadily, in one place, to a stable congregation, the message of the new life in Christ. This is his great and perpetual business. He must not be diverted from this by any other task. He must not let the successful prosecution of this task be interfered with by a mass of parish "chores." He must keep it in the forefront of all his thinking concerning his work. The presence of the evangelistic purpose is what insures the health and strength of the pastor's conception of his ministry.

Every preacher-pastor ought to have a program of evangelistic work, fully planned, flexible, steadfastly adhered to, and known and adopted at least by his official boards. One of the sources of weakness and failure in the modern Church is that there is no definite program or objective. Aiming at nothing, a church will hit it with magnificent success. The reports of registered gains in membership in the Protestant churches in America during the past few years gives us ground for dismay.

There are actually thousands of churches that have made no gain in membership while many have lost in numbers. The sign of life is growth and the lack of growth is the sign of decay if not of death. Searching for the cause of this most discouraging situation we find it to lie chiefly in the fact that so many preachers and churches have no definite program for evangelistic work. They do not seek to present the Gospel, to work definitely to influence persons to accept the Gospel, to make the Gospel the power of God in the modern community as it certainly was in the early days. The chief single cure for the desperate condition is an evangelistic program for every church.

The word "program" as we are using it here is sufficiently clear to require no elaborate discussion. It means that the individual church ought to have an objective and a method by which to reach it, and that the dominant factor in this should be the effort to publish the Christian Gospel and through it to lead men to Christ and bring Christ to the community as the Saviour and the Creator of the new life. In order to do this there must be an order of activities. Those which directly promote this great end deserve the first place and must be carried out without fail. Those that merely contribute accidentally to this supreme objective may be done or not as the energy of the working church warrants. Their omission is not destructive; their discharge is not imperative. Thus the recognition

EVERY PREACHER AN EVANGELIST 51

of the evangelistic purpose of a church and its incorporation into a practical program of action gives us a new scale of values and enables a minister and congregation to adjust their work according to the importance of the things which really ought to be done.

In thus defining the program of the church and making it gather around the principle of evangelistic service to the community, the minister himself is the most important single factor to be reckoned with. There are cases in which a church will rise to the recognition of its supreme business in such a way that the minister will catch the vision from the people and shape his work accordingly. However, in the majority of cases it is the minister who sets the pace for the parish. He must do this by virtue of the place that he holds in the thought of the people. They look to him for the formation of the plans that are to be carried into effect by their united action. Therefore this is an important question: What does the minister, the preacher-pastor himself, think about the priority of evangelism in the work of pulpit and parish? The answer to that question will, in the majority of cases, determine the church program.

At this point we are inevitably driven back to another question, namely, What place is given to evangelism in the schools where ministers are being trained? The matter is vital. We must recognize that the prevailing emphasis in any school pre-

paring candidates for the Christian ministry must be academic. Scholarship is vital to the whole educational process. The evangelistic value of a curriculum cannot be determined by the courses that are given on this particular subject or the number of hours that the students spend in holding meetings of an evangelistic character. It is rather a matter of the whole spirit or emphasis of the curriculum. In college the studies that a student pursues are to a large degree for the purposes of general culture. In the theological schools of a graduate grade the studies are vocational. The vocation of the Christian minister is to express and to extend the message of the new life in Christ as he leads the church committed to his care to manifest the Christian religion in all the life of the community. Now it is possible to be a technical student of the Semitic or Greek languages, a research scholar in Christian history, a thorough scholar in theology, and have the evangelistic purpose uppermost in one's mind and mood all the time. The purpose for which the study is carried on is to make the student a better preacher of the message. The highest type of theological student is a man of this temper. And the best theological school is the one in which this point of view obtains constantly. This is not a mere theory. It has been realized with especial excellence in the theological schools of Scotland. It is the ideal toward which all such institutions ought constantly to aim.

There is no doubt that the tendency of research scholarship and the tasks of the university tend to obscure the primacy of the evangelistic purpose of the ministry, as we are here defining and discussing it. The faculties and the students both need to be reminded that they are engaged in something more than the work of academic research and training. They are preparing preachers and pastors who shall realize in their work the principal business of the Church in the world, to publish and to make an actual part of the environment of living men and women the great Gospel of Christ. One should call himself back to this truth and adjust his bearings to it frequently in order that there may be no loss of the actual scale of values in the ministry.

The objection is sometimes made that anything like a program of church work is too mechanical and does not give the room that we need for the free movement of the spirit of religion. If any minister or church were to make a program so rigid that it did not permit the modification of it fully and flexibly according to the growing need of the church and community this criticism would be valid. But in all our discussion we have kept in mind constantly such a program as allowed all the liberty that is involved in the life of a growing institution. There is such a thing as a normal line of growth in all developing things. It is the part of all self-conscious beings to determine the way in

which development shall take place, at least within the limits of human freedom.

The warrants for a church program have been put so well by Rev. Charles L. Goodell that his statement is quoted here as follows:

“For a successful campaign in the field, every general makes a careful plan and every army wheels to victory or defeat around the drill-sergeant. The captains of industry are men who take an extended purview of their work and adopt an accurate and far-reaching method and plan.

“The Church must be as wise in its greater task for the eternities as are men in the challenge they face for business or battle. Machinery without power is useless, but power without proper machinery is wasted. It clarifies a man’s vision and fires his faith to plan means for a desired end. Methods forestall waste, method economizes time and men, and makes surer and quicker dividends of service.

“The organization which ought to have most of intelligent, intensive and extensive method is the Church of God. The man who ought to have a comprehensive, prepared plan is the pastor to whom hundreds are looking to find a way in which they may best express themselves for the service of God. He must know how to utilize and husband every fragment of time and energy of his people that nothing be lost. His flock will have unbounded respect for a pastor who takes time by the forelock and lays out his work before the rush of the season is upon him and drives him from one task to another with no real plan through the months and years.”

Turning at this point to a practical program for an individual church, or, under most favourable conditions, for a group of churches, we find that

many such have been set up and worked out so that it is not necessary to do more than to refer to a typical example of such constructive work. "A PROGRAM OF PARISH EVANGELISM" is published by the *Congregational Commission on Evangelism*, 287 Fourth Avenue, New York, and may be secured by writing to the office of the Commission. The outline is the result of a careful study of the work of successful pastors and there is no item in it that has not been tested out successfully. It is not adapted merely to the large city church, but may be put into effect in the ordinary parish. While references to certain Communion services reveal the fact that the program has grown out of the work of a certain denomination, the structure of the plan is easily modified to the work of any Protestant church in the country. The plan in its most general outline is as follows:

A YEAR'S PROGRAM

September—December

1. A Meeting of the Church Evangelistic Committee: To face the whole year's work of the church and to map out a year's program.
2. Church Rallies: To bring the church and its work to the attention of all the people.
3. Parish Visitation: To locate and enlist possible attendants and adherents of the church and its organizations.
4. Fall Reception of members at the November Communion.

January—Easter

1. The Preaching of fundamentals.
2. An Invitation Committee: To study the best methods of winning decisions for Christ and to work continuously with the pastor to secure new members.

3. **The Pastor's Training Class:** To instruct children twelve years of age and older in the fundamentals of Christian faith and the meaning of church membership.

4. **The Lenten Prayer Calendar:** Extended use of "The Fellowship of Prayer" in private devotions, at the family altar, in prayer circles and in the work of the Church.

5. **Holy Week Services.**

6. **The Easter Ingathering:** The reception of new members at the Communion Service on or near Easter.

After Easter Conservation

1. **Continuation Plans:** To continue evangelistic endeavours in special groups to Children's Sunday, Mother's Sunday or Pentecost Sunday, and to enlist new members in definite tasks of Christian service.

2. **Absentee Campaign:** The locating and reclaiming of absentee members who are living in the community of the Church though holding membership in churches elsewhere.

In this discussion we are concerned, however, only with the factor of the preaching that is to make up a part, and that the principal part, we believe, in the program as it is conceived by the minister and sanctioned by the church in their joint effort to bring the Gospel to the whole life of the community.

This proposition we need to consider a little more in detail. Is the preaching such an important part of the church program of evangelism? Is there not grave danger that we shall emphasize too heavily the giving of the message by oral address and not allow enough weight to all the teaching and personal interviews that must mark the program if it is to succeed?

All methods of Christian service depend for their success upon the harmonious use of different

forces and methods. All must be held wisely in discriminating balance. So in any evangelistic program, the best results will accrue from such a use of different lines of influence as will secure the most forceful and attractive publication of the Gospel possible under the conditions prevailing in the community. Therefore when we exalt the power of preaching we do not minimize the force of all the other methods that are available to carry out the program. Certainly the stoutest defender of the place and power of preaching would never claim for it the entire credit in the case of success. Without the use of other methods of expressing the Gospel the sermon would, under ordinary conditions, never accomplish the whole purpose of the effort put forth by the Church through its evangelistic program to bring the Gospel to the community. Preaching must be reinforced by all the other lines of personal influence that are essential to make the Gospel plain and to enable it to accomplish its mission in the community.

Granting all this, however, the verdict of experience as seen in history is clear to the effect that the message is made known through preaching. It may seem to the worldly wise as the very vanity of effort; but successes are finally achieved, and the preacher is warranted in expecting that he will receive the verdict of his community in favour of his cause when he preaches with conviction and clearness.

Therefore we urge once more that the Christian preachers of America revive their resolute faith in their task and their message and that they dare to believe all the promises of final success crowning their faithful work when they preach the Gospel of Christ. Results will come in time and no work is too hard and no confidence is too great to put into the glorious work of preaching the Gospel to a community either in the most favoured section of America or in the heart of darkest heathendom.

In affirming as strongly as we have done that every preacher is essentially an evangelist, we do not disparage or dispute the right to recognition and honour at the hands of the Church by that group of heralds of the Gospel who are technically known as evangelists. Whatever changes may have come to pass in time, certainly at the very beginning of the work of organized Christianity there were preachers who bore the name evangelist. The record of the work of these men and their successors is too deeply cut into the history of the developing Church to warrant any repudiation of their name and mission.

That there has been a growing tendency to disparage the place of the evangelist in many quarters admits of no doubt. There are many reasons for this. In some cases the evangelists are themselves to blame for the condition in considerable measure. It is wholly possible for a good man to become intoxicated by big meetings and conspicuous success.

It is easy to indulge in caustic criticisms. The deadness of the church in many instances lends itself to attack.

Then it must be admitted that the evangelistic "campaign" has lent itself to the use of all kinds of methods designed to make the "free-will" offering for the evangelist anything but free. Criticism of the financial program of many evangelists is warranted by intimate knowledge of the facts. Granted that evangelists work under heavy pressure and that their talents would command large salaries in other vocations, it is still true that just enough warrant for the judgment exists to make the claim of "profiteering" one that plagues the cause. There are many unselfish evangelists to whose charge no least method of exploitation can be laid; the majority of these men belong, we believe, in this group. But nothing is gained for the cause of Christ by masking the fact that the whole matter of "professional" evangelism has been seriously injured in the minds of devoted Christian men and women by the methods that have been used to increase the offerings for the evangelist at the close of campaigns. Ministers have known of these methods and have been estranged from the program of evangelism because of them. Laymen in the business world have been outraged by the forms of pressure to which they have been subjected.

Out of this has grown a humiliating situation.

Ministers have sometimes been attacked; occasionally they have been the offenders. The same is true in reference to the evangelists. But both types are necessary to the developing church. If the preacher-pastor would only become more of an evangelist and if the evangelist would occasionally try out the experience of having a parish to care for rather than to come in on the tide of a campaign and flow on to another, it would be better on both sides. But there ought to be a warmer sympathy between the two forms of preaching. Each is necessary to the other and both are vital to the complete proclamation of the Gospel of the new life in Christ.

V

THE EVANGELISTIC SERMON

AS the practice of Christian preaching went on and the general principles governing it were developed there appeared various types of sermons. Two great classes were apparent at an early date. There were those sermons which were designed primarily to publish the Gospel as a message to those who never had heard it or who needed to hear some new aspects of it presented. These were known as *evangelistic* sermons. Then there were such sermons as were designed especially to build up the life and character of those who were already adherents of the Gospel. Such discourses were called *pastoral* or edifying sermons. In the strict sense of the word, all sermons are evangelistic, for they are publications of some phase of the manifold Gospel and are meant to make it more fully known. However, for all practical purposes the classification is valid and we shall respect it.

An evangelistic sermon is, naturally, nearest the type of the most characteristic Christian sermon. For the business of the preacher is to declare the Gospel; and that sermon which most fully declares

the message, even if it is concerned only with an essential detail of it, is closest to the best and noblest form of a Christian discourse. Occasionally one hears the evangelistic sermon disparaged as if it were in some way an inferior type of Christian preaching. This is not the case and it is a mistake to undervalue the sermon that publishes the Gospel by preferring any other form of pulpit address. Preaching ought to be kept close to essential form; and the most thoroughly Christian sermon is the one that admits of classification as evangelistic.

We look now briefly at the outstanding marks of the evangelistic sermon. The first characteristic that appears is the burden of the *message* in the sermon. There is a vast difference between a proposition in mathematics, an affirmation supported by argument in logic, and a message direct to personality on the part of a living speaker. The fact that two and two equals four, or that Columbus discovered America in 1492 does not make any change in the conduct and character of one who hears or learns these undisputed facts. They leave the conduct of living persons unmodified and bring no real news that is either good or bad. But if I am far away from home and some one is coming from the old town with a message from my mother, that is quite another matter. The words take on new meaning. They are laden with a beautiful content and they are awaited with a wistfulness of

which we never were conscious as we studied our geometry. Love and memory and precious thought are all wrought into what is said. There is a message in it. It is not a proposition; it is news from home.

Now put all this into the sermon that brings to men the message from God and the implications are plain. The preacher has something to say that is so tender and urgent, so packed with yearning love and gracious invitation, that his discourse, both as literary form and spoken address, is different from anything else with which it might be classified if this fact of the message in it were disregarded. This sermon is spoken home to the heart of the hearers. It has within it the power to make a difference with human lives. It tells us news. Something that we ought to know is being told to us. There is warning and comfort, there is help and hope in it.

This fact ought to make a real difference to the preacher as he works in preparing his sermon and delivers it to the people. To debate a question or to deliver a formal lecture is one matter; to bring a message of life to the soul of one's comrade is quite a different thing. What a privilege and joy it is to bear a great, heartening message of redemption and new life to the yearning spirit of a generation! It is simply the biggest business that any living man can do in his time.

Because it is a message, the evangelistic sermon

must be simple, plain and direct. These are the qualities that we associate naturally with the expression of news. Certainly if one is to convey a message that is important he will see to it first of all that it is clear and easy to be understood. There must be no doubt regarding what the messenger means. If he has to take time to explain or to discuss or to defend his message we feel that he is not a very good messenger. We want to know immediately what he has on his mind to tell us. The best compliment that can be paid to a sermon is not to say that it was eloquent or grand but to say honestly that it was clear and easily understood. We want to know what the preacher is driving at and we want him to drive at it strongly and swiftly and accurately. A lecture may be in an elaborate and highly finished style. We expect this form of literary treatment also in the essay. But an evangelistic sermon is the burning word of a man who is sure of something and feels that he is sent straight to men who want to know what he is sure of.

Since it is a message, the evangelistic sermon is directed accurately at the hearer and at life as it is being lived now. There is nothing of that "remoteness" from life, which we have noted as a characteristic of modern preaching. The messenger did not shout out his message to any one who happened to be within the range of his voice; he carried it most patiently and thoughtfully to the one to whom it was sent. Now it is quite possible

for a preacher to become absorbed in some book that gains his attention or to be wrapped up in some particular line of study that is proving profitable to him. He is in danger of being so sure that this particular book or set of ideas is also interesting and profitable to the congregation that he will give them his book or his cogitations instead of his message. The way to avoid this danger is to get the consciousness of a great message so inwrought into the substance of preaching that it will not allow itself to be overlooked. The Gospel is aimed straight at life. It has something to do with all the ongoinings of the most commonplace day of the humblest man. So the evangelistic sermon hits the mark. Not that any preacher will ever deliberately single out any person or group with the intention of "hitting" them in a cowardly way from the safety of the pulpit. But the message in the evangelistic sermon is directed toward the actual life of the people and it is expected to find its mark, without any desire to do injustice to the personal character of any one.

The evangelistic sermon must be directed to the whole hearer, that is, it must seek to convince his mind, to move his feelings and to persuade his will to the point where it registers a new decision concerning the dominant motives of his life. It is a serious mistake to think that an evangelistic sermon does not need to be grounded in the soundest logic and to be of such a character that it will bear

searching debate. It is a current notion that an evangelistic sermon must be "emotional" primarily and so make its great appeal to the feelings. We are inclined to think that the preacher must put the most thorough intellectual preparation upon his morning or "edifying" sermon, but his "evangelistic" appeal must be directed especially to the emotions. This is a disastrous blunder in judgment. No permanent Christian decision will be registered by any one whose mind has not been thoroughly persuaded of the reasonableness of Christ's claim upon him. Thorough rational consideration of the Gospel is fundamental in order to its acceptance with any hope of constancy in the decision.

(The evangelistic sermon does not stop with the rational presentation of the message. While back of the sermon must lie the deepest and sincerest thinking that the preacher can give to his great proclamation, it must all be warmed and bathed in the passion with which he believes and presents it. The intellectual content of the sermon will not lie apparent on the surface; if it does we shall get nothing more than a lecture in divinity out of it. But it will be there; it will not disappear wholly; it will give warrant to the whole appeal. So the emotional factor steps strongly forward in the evangelistic sermon. The preacher wants to make his hearers feel the message; then he must feel it himself. Nothing will kindle emotion but emo-

tion. The preacher whose voice never breaks never will see any hard hearts broken by his message. But deep feeling cannot be summoned into action at the word of command. In fact, the preacher who is not habitually earnest and moved in respect to his message will evoke only slight and occasional response. So what the preacher feels permanently concerning his message will determine the emotional content of the individual sermon. Thus the best emotional preparation for an evangelistic sermon will be made as the preacher reviews his own indebtedness to Christ, and warms his heart once more as he reflects upon the love and loyalty that he owes to his Master in consequence. If we appraise repeatedly the grounds of our love and gratitude to Christ we shall find ourselves tuned to the right emotional mood and shall be able to kindle others to a similar glow and flame of affection.

The most important factor, however, in the evangelistic sermon is the direct drive for a decision in favour of the message on the part of the hearers. The evangelistic preacher is a pleader, an advocate, a champion. He attacks fearlessly, positively and by the persuasive power of love the wills of his congregation and he asks for their verdict. He expects this. This note of confidence and expectation will colour his whole action. He will not be timid or hesitant; he will have what has been so aptly called "holy boldness." This is the temper

in which Peter and Paul preached the Gospel at the beginning. It is appropriate to the bearer of the message now. The direct appeal may take the form of a call to register the decision in some specific act, the signing of a card, the raising of the hand, coming to the front, attending an after-meeting, or some other form of expression. This must be settled according to the preacher's own judgment and taste. To some preachers it is difficult to call for any register of decision; others do it easily and happily. It is not imperative in every sermon: it may be omitted altogether. Yet such is the urgency in this kind of a sermon that probably some kind of an appeal for a definite and registered decision is desirable.

More important than any single act of decision, however, is the persuasive character of the sermon as a whole. The evangelistic sermon must be simply keyed to the note of invitation and persuasion. Here is where many a preacher makes a mistake. He feels that it is his duty to rebuke, to scold, to chastise, rather than to persuade and to invite and to woo. He is more like John the Baptist and less like Jesus. His task is to persuade and invite. (Any preacher can provide for this as he prepares and preaches his sermon. It all resolves itself into the simple habit of putting the element of appeal and invitation into the sermon, deliberately and constantly, because it belongs there.) It is so much better to see men come to

their Saviour rather than to suffer under their sin! Therefore in taking his very first step of preparation, in all his gathering of material, in his preparation and delivery of his sermon, let the preacher say to himself, (I am going to get results through this sermon by making it so persuasive that God can use it to reach the wills of hearers and make them decide for Christ because it seems like a reasonable and desirable act to them.) With this aim constantly in his mind, the material going into the sermon will be selected and ordered in such a way that the persuasive factor will never be lost for a moment from beginning to end.

It must be apparent from what has been said regarding the evangelistic sermon that most diligent care must be taken in its preparation. There is an element of spontaneous testimony in it; the winds of the free spirit blow through it; but it is thought over, felt through, and written and corrected because it is the finest expression of the good news that the preacher knows how to give, and so nothing less than the best will answer.

An item to which great care must be given is the selection of the illustrations in the evangelistic sermon. They are the windows that let in the light upon the truth; they are exceedingly important. Abstract statements are remembered with difficulty even if they are comprehended. The most finely finished and incisive sentences may not get themselves understood. A vivid figure or an appealing

incident will often drive a truth home and fix it there quickly and permanently. In selecting and preparing the illustrations keep them close to life. Jesus is the great example of the effective illustration of the good news. If He used a figure it was taken from the daily life of the people so that it was plain and vivid. If He told a story it was drawn from the common experience of men so that they saw the analogy and felt its force. Jesus took simple things and made them the vehicle of moral and spiritual truth. Another principle to be observed in choosing and working out the illustrations is accuracy. "Thou shalt not bear false witness" is an ancient commandment that is still valid even in the making of a sermon. There are many illustrations that have been used often and are quite current among ministers; new examples and anecdotes will be met as one reads and observes; and every one ought to be subjected to the test of truthfulness. A false or overdrawn illustration, however vivid it may appear at the moment and however forceful it might be at the time of use will, in the end, defeat its own object. Reject the illustration that bears the suspicion of exaggeration or untruthfulness. Probably the tendency to use "death bed" illustrations or stories of a tragic character in order to appeal strongly to the emotions and thereby produce quick decisions has nearly passed away. If it still persists in a preacher's habit it ought to be held resolutely in

check. We do not seek to make men believe the good news by frightening them. We are better students of psychology than that. The appeal that wins the will's consent is cast into the terms of invitation and of love. Also a preacher will act under the principle of reserve and repression as he uses personal illustrations. Testimony may be given in the sermon. The first personal pronoun belongs there occasionally. But never suffer the lugging in of irrelevant personal details and the dragging out of personal experiences. The preacher has the right to say "I" in his sermon; but always modestly and with becoming reserve.

Since it is a message, the evangelistic sermon will be delivered with a glowing confidence. The method of delivery ought to be carefully worked out. Grotesque performances in the pulpit or on the platform, extravagant gestures and postures are a hindrance in the end to the delivery of the message. That is not the way in which sensible men, dead in earnest about anything, act in other places. There are always certain persons in a circus who specialize in antics; but the Christian preacher is not a clown and the evangelistic meeting is not a circus. On the other hand, the Gospel is something to feel excited about. If it is the greatest message that ever has been given to the world—and it is—then the man who knows that message fully cannot tell his comrades about it with an unimpassioned mind and manner. The preacher simply must throw

himself into his sermon with his heart aflame. He must give himself lavishly in the utterance of this truth. He will hold himself within the firm leash of good taste and consistent manners; but also he will "let go" without apology. He cannot do otherwise. He is telling his fellow men the most wonderful story that human lips can frame into words.

Of all the sermons that a preacher delivers the evangelistic is the one that he commits to the future with the greatest confidence in the final achievement of its purpose. The evangelistic sermon is the object of our faith. It is like the farmer sowing his seed. He prepares the ground and puts the seed into it according to his best judgment. Then he trusts the patient and benevolent processes of nature to bring the fruit. He does not try to hurry it. He believes and waits. The illustration, like all others, is not quite suited to the truth, for the preacher's personal influence avails more with the truth in his sermon than the farmer's skill does with the sown seed. But it illustrates the truth that the evangelistic preacher implicitly trusts the quickening power of the Spirit. When he has done his best he must wait and pray and expect results in God's own time and way. We are responsible for the contact between the truth and the souls of men; we are not ultimately responsible for the conversion of the souls of men to that truth. There is a higher power than ours at work in the

process. It is the Holy Spirit. We rely upon that. If we were obliged to bear the whole responsibility of quickening our community through the power of the Gospel it would crush us. We do not. We are agents and voices and messengers; but results rest with God. Jesus made that fact clear to His disciples. For our peace and power as preachers we need to learn the lesson. With convincing power, working in manifold ways, the Holy Spirit takes the truth, even poorly expressed in our sermon, and brings it home with divine power to the souls of men. This is the source of our joy and confidence as preachers of the everlasting Gospel.

What is the relation of the Christian *message* to the Christian *theology*? We are often inclined to think that there is such a difference between them that either the one or the other is to be maintained or disregarded. Every preacher who sets out to realize the supreme purpose of his work, that is, to give the Gospel to the community in every possible way because it is the very message of life and power, ought to be clear in his own mind concerning the relation between the message and the theology of the Christian religion. Certain facts are apparent.

The message was first in order of time; the theology followed as a matter of necessity. The disciples and first followers of Jesus did not concern themselves with any logical effort to reduce the

truth that He had taught them to systematic form. Their purpose was not interpretation or explanation; it was proclamation and declaration. They had learned something that seemed to them so immensely important that they immediately gave themselves up to the task of letting their new-found truth be known as widely as possible and in every way at their command. That was their one immediate, urgent and almost desperate business. The world was in deadly danger; they knew how to save it; they were willing to go through fire and water to tell men that there was a way out of peril. As we read this story we are sensitive to the heroism and the power of it. These men were so splendid in their devotion! They shame us with our easy-going comforts. They met danger and death with superb courage. We growl because the chair is not cushioned and the room is not warm. There is no doubt that the passion and the heroism of the early years of the Christian enterprise are altogether too lacking in our modern Christian life. The days of the message were the days of heroism and advance.

The work of the theologians began early. It was imperative and vital. The mind must engage with the facts of life and seek to reduce them to order. God made us with eager minds as well as loving hearts. The young faith was attacked by enemies from outside; it was threatened by divisions from within. Under the strain of this situa-

tion the defenders of the faith worked out the first apologies for it; the champions of one aspect of it in contrast with another set forth the details of the message with logical completeness. Every active mind inevitably set to work to reduce the message to a logical unity; the reason must demand this of everything that asks the consent of our wills. So came the days of the theologians. And inevitably with them there came also a lowering of the degree of passion and a diminishing of the apostolic assurance. Not that they were lost. Far from it. Not that the losses were more than the gains. That was not true at all. In the end the gains more than compensated for the apparent losses. But it is impossible to reduce the work of the messenger to the propositions of the logician without the loss of the herald's first ardour. It is like a young lover who experiences the first chastening of his logic as he tries to think out the reasons for his sudden devotion. In the end he will be a better lover if he sits down with himself in the solemn wrestling demanded by his logic and his economic sense. He may squander a little less money on roses and entertainments; but he gives promise of being an altogether better husband because he can give a little stronger reason for the love that is in him.

The question is often asked, Why not return to the simplicity of the early testimony? That was the method at the beginning. Why not now? The first answer is, Because the conditions have

changed. There is now a great body of Christian truth in our possession, the rich result of the experience of the past and the thought that has been put upon it. This has immensely enriched the content of the Gospel. It has not changed its essential factors, which are what they were in the beginning; but it has enlarged them until they are more ample and appealing. It is easier now to make the appeal for Christ because we have the testimony of almost two thousand years from which to draw for confirmation.

And also the age is immensely more complex in its interests and demands. Men have the right to ask for something more than simply the testimony of the disciple or the ardent words of the recent convert. Persuasion is a varied art and makes many demands upon us. It calls for the accurate and reasoned statement as well as for the fervid testimony. The Christian pleader and advocate cannot afford to spare the formal and systematic statement of the Gospel in the form of theology. It is the vital complement to the testimony of the Christian witness.

Therefore the evangelist should be a theologian as the true theologian ought also to be the evangelist. Each task is necessary to the other. It is a great loss to the evangelist if he disparages theology. Occasionally one hears an evangelistic preacher say that he is no theologian. If this is a confession of humility it may be permitted; but if

it is a disparagement of theology it is a fearful mistake. He ought to be a theologian; or at least he ought to try to be one. Back of every serious attempt to publish the Gospel lies a review and fresh statement of the fundamental theology of the Christian religion. It will not be presented as a theology, of course; but it will be the supporting framework of the sermons. They will be organized around the great basic truths of the Christian religion as these have been wrought out by the earnest work of the theologians of the past and as they represent the deepest thinking that the preacher can do himself.

In the sermons that are suggested in this study of evangelistic preaching the theological sources and values have been kept constantly in mind. No effort is made to include all the truths that compose the body of Christian theology; but the main facts have been kept in view and the purpose in the sermons is to bring the whole Christian message to the community.

VI

EVANGELISM AS THE ORGANIZING PRINCIPLE IN PREACHING

ONE of the greatest dangers in the work of preaching is the tendency to work from hand to mouth in preparing the weekly sermon instead of having a plan worked out in advance by which one great line of thought is carried through the church year from autumn to spring, inclusive. It never ought to be necessary to ask, What shall I preach about next Sunday? as the new week begins. The sermons of the year should be so well defined that the preacher will be sure what he is to do even three months in advance.

This organization of the year's preaching around some great subject or axis of vital interest we call *Organized Preaching*. It is the way out of uncertainty and the path to power for every preacher who will work according to some method of this general kind.

There are many principal subjects or centers of interest around which the preaching of the year may be organized. The life and message of Jesus, the proofs of the Christian religion, Christ's idea

of the Kingdom of God, essential Christian truths, expository treatment of important Bible passages, and the social application of Christian principles are all vital and full of interest. There is no other single subject, however, that affords so much in the way of subject matter and variety as the presentation in its fullness of the Gospel as a message with the purpose of securing acceptance of it by a surrender of life to the claims of Christ. Our problem is not to find material but rather to select wisely from the vast amount of material such subjects, arguments, illustrations and appeals as shall present the greatest of all messages to the world in adequate fashion.

Yielding all the Sundays which must be given up to the church occasions and to those interests in the community which demand recognition from the pulpit, there remain about thirty-two Sundays during the year when the preacher may speak on the subjects that he chooses. No better program can be devised than to present the appeal of the Gospel consecutively and with growing emphasis during these Sundays. This would not, of course, be done every year; but with the variations that are possible it is feasible to go over the ground at least every four or five years. The time to make the program is late in the summer, near the close of the vacation. It should be shaped with the experience of the past year or years clearly in mind, surveyed at such a distance that perspective is pos-

sible. Let the matter grow quietly in your calm reflection concerning the work and problems in the field until August or early September. Then take time enough for more positive and consecutive thinking. This is one of the most important actions of the whole year. Do not bring to it either a fatigued or distracted mind. Be sure that you are at your best when you take up the preaching program for the year. Keep the whole problem in mind so far as that is possible while you think and make notes. Do not work on the matter too long; but work with concentration while you are engaged with it. Now imagine the community; renew in your consciousness the meaning and urgency of the Gospel; then determine what great aspects of the message you will present during thirty-two Sundays, more or less, and broken as they must be by the claims of the occasions that call for pulpit recognition. It is best to work with small cards or slips of paper, noting subjects, texts or key thoughts which will express the message to the community. If these are jotted down on cards they can be arranged at will. Finally, at least the major part of the year's sermons ought to be in hand, well arranged, with many notes already in shape for the fuller study. A preacher can go back to his autumn task with a happy sense of certainty and freedom if he has this little package of material with him. He will not be feeling out after subjects during the year. He knows where

he is going and he is sure that, so far as he has been able to shape his program, the preaching will be unified during the year and will tend steadily toward one supreme objective. It is like a blue print to the engineer and contractor. It shows what is to be done; it keeps the relationships clear; it is the standard to which the work conforms from day to day.

This organization of the year's preaching around the presentation of the Gospel as a message is based on the idea that the preacher-pastor is an evangelist and that he can do this work while he carries on his regular duties as the organizer and administrator of parish activities and the pastor of the congregation as well. But it may be that the needs of the community cannot be met without the carrying on of a series of evangelistic services, apart from the regular appointments for public worship and preaching. There are many names for this series of meetings: evangelistic services, revival meetings, special services for the religious life. On the whole the term "mission" is growing in favour. It stands for the purpose of the meetings. They may be organized and carried out by a church with its own preacher and lay workers. There is help enough to be had if the plans are well made and the people will work. It is better in many cases to have such a church mission with the people themselves carrying the responsibility than it is to bring in an evangelist and staff,

for the people are inclined to shift their burden of responsibility under these conditions and put it wholly on the evangelist and his organized campaign.

We now take up an outline of thirty-two sermon subjects which are organized around the evangelistic message. These are simply texts, titles, and certain suggestive "seed thoughts," which are designed to stimulate the preacher in his thinking. They are not sermon "outlines" which are to be followed in the development of the subject. They are intended for three possible uses:

1. These suggestions show how a preacher may organize his year's pulpit work around the evangelistic subject and preach steadily on the great message. Let it be clearly understood that we do not advocate the use of any of these subjects and texts just as they are given. And it would probably be quite impossible for a preacher to follow the order as it is given. The purpose of the course is not to present a plan to be followed, but rather to show how it is possible to draw up such a plan and carry it out during the church year. We cannot stress too strongly the point that the material that follows is simply in the way of suggestion, to provoke thinking rather than to fetter it, and that so far as it may be used by a preacher it must be worked over and adapted to his own methods and to the needs of the community.

2. It is hoped that the suggestions that follow

will be of use in the conduct of a church mission. We have in mind a series of meetings beginning on Sunday and lasting fifteen days, excluding evening services on the two Saturdays. Out of the thirty-two subjects given, sixteen are to be selected for these meetings, namely, two for each of the three Sundays, and one for each of the five week days during the fortnight of meetings. These subjects may be developed according to the character of the services; but the suggestions will be useful, it is to be hoped, whatever kind of service is used in the meeting.

3. In making these suggestions it is also our purpose to propose an order of sermons that would be fitted to use in a regular evangelistic campaign. Every evangelist has worked out his program with such care that little is needed by him in the way of suggestion as to the unity and the progress of his messages from day to day. Yet every fresh arrangement has in it some value, and therefore we hope that this plan of sermons may have something of worth in it because it presents another arrangement of the subjects into which the great message may fall. The preaching task of an evangelist is not an easy one. There is the danger on the one hand that his messages will become stereotyped; on the other, that they will lack cohesion and will not reach any real climax. Possibly the plan outlined in the following pages will be of service in escaping either or both of these dangers.

PART II

A Program of Evangelistic Preaching, with Sermon Outlines

A PROGRAM OF EVANGELISTIC PREACHING

ON the basis of what has been said in the preceding chapters we now undertake to set forth thirty-two texts and subjects which present the Gospel as a message to the community. They rest on a certain definite theological basis which seems to us the simple evangelical foundation of the New Testament, interpreted and illustrated by the best results of modern thinking. This theology is not that of any particular school or name. It is the most consistent statement that we can make of the simplest Christian message. It gathers about the fact of the living Christ and the possibility of the soul finding its complete realization in allegiance to Christ. It involves the teaching of Jesus concerning the Kingdom of God which was perfectly exemplified in His own life of love and service among men.

This is a *message*. Every preacher will organize his own subjects and material according to his own ideas, taste and sense of adaptation to his community. But his message he must give. The community needs and the Church demands evangelistic preaching.

That this is the supreme business of the Chris-

tian pulpit requires no detailed discussion or defense. It has been thus from the very beginning of Christian activity. The disciples rallied their faith in their living Master and then went out to tell all the world that they knew Him as the Saviour and Lord. This testimony was simple, direct, and positive at the beginning, and, in spite of the way in which the content of the message has enlarged as time has gone on, it still remains the great and permanent business of the preacher. The increased meaning of the message and its application to the whole life of mankind has made the work of preaching the Gospel more complex and exacting; but it never has changed its warrants or released the preacher from his obligation to be a herald and a witness of the message of good news that Jesus brought to the world and for which He lived and died.

There are certain fundamental convictions that are imperative before a preacher will undertake this program. He must renew his ardent conviction of the truth of his message and the worth of his task as its herald. Christian preachers need to study their charter often in order that they may not lose their accurate sense of the work that it is their first duty to carry on in the community.

The tendency of parish work is to crowd to the wall the primacy of preaching and especially the supremacy of that kind of preaching which is concerned with the giving of the message to the com-

munity. There are so many errands to be run; so many entries to be made on cards; so many interests to be served! But there is only one dominant purpose in the minister's pulpit work; it is to give in every possible phase and accent the old message that Jesus first announced in Palestine and which the apostolic succession of Christian preachers has perpetuated ever since. In the midst of the bewildering demands of the modern parish the preacher needs to reaffirm this principle daily as he prepares for his preaching.

The idea prevails widely that the work of the resident minister in his pulpit is to lay emphasis on the teaching aspect of preaching and delegate the more purely evangelistic task to men who specialize in this form of the sermon and who travel among the churches holding evangelistic meetings or conducting campaigns. There is a permanent place for the technical evangelist; there are times and communities that demand the organized movement carried on by the evangelist and his staff of workers. But there is a far larger place for distinctly evangelistic preaching and action in the program of every congregation. It is what is sometimes called *Evangelism Church-wide and All the Year Through*. It means that the preaching is organized around the purpose to present the Gospel to the community as a message of life; that the people are united and directed in the support of the program so that they will make personal and

persistent efforts to introduce men and women to Christ. It involves a movement of the whole Church steadily and steadfastly toward the impression of the Gospel upon the total life of the community. It defines the chief business of the Church in this endeavour and calls for all the possible resources of the people, drives us to new consecration and prayer, and fuses the energies of the faithful friends of Christ into one supreme loyalty and service. The organization of the church for this purpose is the highest privilege of the pastor.

As a part of this program the preaching of the year will be planned to present the Gospel with new force and conviction. Therefore it is necessary to define again in one's mind and restore in one's experience the pristine meaning of the message which Jesus brought to the world and which was experienced by His earliest followers. A re-reading of the New Testament with this purpose in mind will be the best single way in which to gather the material for the sermons and to determine what subjects should be preached upon. *What is the Gospel?* The word has been used so long that its first clear-cut meaning has been worn away like the face of a coin that has suffered hard usage. We must review and renew our consciousness of this noble word. It was good news in the first century; it is still good news where men strive with the underlying sins of the spirit; our work is to make it good news to ourselves and to others

in spite of the commonplace character that time and custom have given to it.

Then, having selected the requisite thirty-two subjects which seem to be concerned with the publication of a real message to the modern community, a message which has "found" you and in which you believe with all your powers, the work of sermon preparation will begin. Of all the preaching to which the minister has devoted himself he will find that this is the most stimulating, delightful, and rewarding. The happiest business in life is to set forth with all the powers at one's command the Gospel of the reconciliation in Christ.

In attempting to give the message which we call the Gospel, with what shall we begin? Perhaps the most familiar point of departure is the doctrine of God. Certainly this is the underlying truth that warrants the message and it must never be allowed to become obscured. Occasionally a preacher starts with the nature of man, his yearning for God, his essential religious character. This is vital. We must be sure that religion is an integral part of man's normal life. If it is something artificial or accidental, then there is no reason to expect that there will be a permanent response to the message. Preachers sometimes begin with the fact of Christ. He was the Messenger; in certain respects it is true that He is the Message. If we gain at the outset a clear idea of Jesus, if we are warmed by the appeal that comes from His radiant Person, we

shall be disposed to accept the Gospel and to trust in it as the way into a new life for ourselves and for the world.

The place that Jesus has occupied in the Christian experience of the world makes it seem reasonable to begin with a brief setting forth of Christ as the object of faith and love, with the expectation that through Him we shall come to know God, to understand the meaning of sin and repentance, shall appreciate the new life that begins when we unite ourselves in obedience to Christ, and shall bring out the practical results in conduct that are the issue of this allegiance to Christ as Master and Saviour. Therefore we begin this series of sermons which is to present the Gospel to the community as a claim upon their surrendered wills with a presentation of Christ as the object of love and trust.

In preparing these sermons the New Testament is the primary source of material. To read and re-read its records of the life and message of Jesus is the first privilege of the preacher. In addition two books will be found of great value. The first is *Outlines of the Life of Christ*, by William Sanday (2d ed. New York: Scribner's, 1912). Among the numerous books on the life of Christ this is on the whole the most satisfactory as a working manual for the preacher. The second is *The Fact of Christ*, by P. Carnegie Simpson (Revell, about 1900). This is a study of the char-

acter and work of Jesus in a constructive way and is especially valuable because it sets forth the meaning of the Christian life in terms of a personal relation to Christ which is peculiarly adapted to preaching. There are many other studies of the character of Christ that will be of value; but we mention only these two because we do not wish to load our pages with references to books. And the most valuable material which the preacher will use in his sermons on Christ is that which will come hot from his own affectionate reflection on the record of the matchless life of the Master and the "wonder of his gracious words."

The purpose of these first sermons is to present Jesus in such an attractive way that those who hear will be disposed to receive His message favourably because they admire and love Him as the Messenger. Therefore we shall seek to bring out the lovely character of the Jesus of the New Testament, who is the basis of the Christ of the doctrines. We shall avoid at the outset any divisive doctrine in order that we may come with open minds, as the first disciples did, to the virile, noble, winsome Man of Nazareth.

SERMON ONE

The first seven sermons are devoted to the character of Jesus and His claim upon our allegiance. The purpose of this first division of the sermons is

to get the call of Christ clearly before the people. It is necessary to show the way in which that claim may be recognized and responded to. Especially must we show that the Christ whom we love and serve is not a dead Example but a living Lord.

We begin with the human life of Jesus. In this first sermon the preacher will do his best to set forth the consummate beauty of the Great Life. Read and think and even wonder and adore in the presence of the figure of Jesus of Nazareth. Use the imagination until His personality is vivid. Ponder on His words until their searching and painful beauty sinks into your soul. Do not preach this sermon until you are actually glowing with your renewed appreciation of Jesus. Let your emotions play around the scenes from His life until those qualities which you have selected to present in the sermon are radiant and vivid. Do not be afraid that there will be any loss to the divine Christ as a result of the intensity with which the figure of the historic Jesus is presented. Remember how Phillips Brooks brought out the figure of Christ by stressing the human perfection of Jesus.

In preparing this sermon it may help us to read again the poem by Sidney Lanier entitled "The Crystal," found in his *Poems* at page 29. He reviews the names and characters of the great spirits of the ages, in each of which something imperfect is found. Then he comes to Christ:

“ But Thee, but Thee, O sovereign Seer of time,
 But Thee, O poet’s Poet, Wisdom’s Tongue,
 But Thee, O man’s best Man, O love’s best Love,
 O perfect life in perfect labour writ,
 O all men’s Comrade, Servant, King, or Priest,—
 What *if* or *yet*, what mole, what flaw, what lapse;
 What least defect or shadow of defect,
 What rumour, tattled by an enemy,
 Of inference loose, what lack of grace
 Even in torture’s grasp, or sleep’s, or death’s,—
 Oh, what amiss may I forgive in Thee,
 Jesus, good Paragon, thou Crystal Christ.”

This is the way that Jesus impresses the devout and honest student of His matchless life. Having gained this impression it is the preacher’s glad privilege to seek to impress it upon others. This we undertake in the first instance by means of a sermon on The Man of Nazareth. We want to create a presumption in favour of Jesus that will make the favourable response to His divine claims natural and imperative.

The Man of Nazareth

Behold, the man! (John 19: 5).

An exclamation of contempt becomes the highest tribute that could be given to a human being. Jesus is the one supreme Man. The way to know Christ is to know God. His life and experience furnish the base line from which we run our survey of life and chart the moral and spiritual universe.

His complete and glorious humanity commands

our admiration and discipleship. We are sure when we are in His presence that we are in contact with everything that is noblest and best in our humanity. What we would like to become in our highest moments Jesus was constantly.

His courage commands our trust and confidence. Courage is admirable in all men under all circumstances. The brave man is the defender of truth, the champion of justice, the guardian of the weak. Jesus never showed the white feather.

His loyalty commands our allegiance. It crowned His courage. He never once failed His God, His comrades, or His Cause. It cost Him labour and watching, pain and death. He kept faith with His ideals; He stood steadfast with the unpopular truth.

His unselfishness commands our service. Jesus was endowed with wonderful personal gifts. Men and women loved to be in His company because He was so friendly and so kind. He was utterly unselfish. He never put His own interests first.

His joy kindles our yearnings and invites our decision in His favour. Jesus was a happy man. The so-called "Beatitudes" are the assurances of happiness; and Jesus realized all of them in His own life from day to day. Men never would have inferred from the life of Jesus that the world was a gloomy place or this life a "vale of tears." Men asked Jesus to be their guest because they liked to have Him around.

On each of these counts the life of Jesus commends His message to us. What He was creates a presupposition that what He said is true and that it is de-

sirable. Therefore Jesus Himself is the best final warrant for accepting the Gospel which He brought to the world.

SERMON TWO

The name by which Jesus was commonly known was Rabbi, which means Teacher. Therefore it is natural that we should take this aspect of His work and character as the subject for the second sermon that is to present Christ to the community.

We remember that the subject matter of the Master's teaching is different from that with which the academic teachers are concerned. He gave men truth by which to live; He was neither a scientist nor a philosopher as we understand these terms now. Also His method was simple. He put the truth in the plainest form and then illustrated it perfectly by His own life. This conformity of His words and deeds makes Him supremely great as a teacher; we learn quite as much from what He was as from what He said.

It is only within recent years that attention has been turned to Jesus as a World Teacher. We are fortunate in having a book now which sets forth the subject in the form of studies for class or discussion groups and which ought to be worked through carefully by preachers. We refer to *Jesus the Master Teacher*, by Herman Harrell Horne, N. Y.: Association Press, 1920, price \$2.00.

The very fact that this is a book for study rather

than for consecutive reading, with every page bristling with questions that provoke thought and study makes the volume especially valuable for the preacher who must work diligently and for a long time on this sermon concerning Jesus the Teacher. If it is impossible to give sufficient time to the study to carry it through to the end, at least the contents of Chapter XXV on "His Qualities as a Teacher" ought to be worked through carefully. Prof. Horne indicates the following as the essential qualifications of a World-Teacher:

1. A vision that encompasses the world.
2. Knowledge of the heart of man.
3. Mastery of the subject taught.
4. Aptness in teaching.
5. A life that embodies the teaching.

In selecting the points to be presented in the sermon we must use our own best judgment and treat the items that appear to us most vital. How do these strike you? Are they arranged in the right order for the climax of the sermon? What practical illustrations of them occur to you as you reflect upon them?

This will be one of the sermons that will grow with brooding upon the subject and it will be a great pleasure to perfect it gradually through reflection and formal preparation.

The Great Teacher

And every day he was teaching in the temple. . . .

And all the people came early in the morning to him in the temple, to hear him (Luke 21: 37, 38).

We all must learn to live. Somewhere there must be found a teacher who can give us the truth. Jesus can meet this need.

The Teacher.—Jesus was a simple, natural, sympathetic Teacher. The scribes were dull, technical, out of touch with life. They argued at weary length about laws, ceremonies, and abstruse speculations. Jesus understood men, set forth the truth vividly, transfused it with warm human affection.

The truth.—As Jesus taught it truth bore directly upon life. The Sermon on the Mount is not a formal discourse on a religious subject; it is a workable program for individual and social living. Every principle that Jesus taught connects directly with the common work of the average man.

The method.—Jesus used homely figures and simple stories to express truth. He did not give detailed definitions or carry on elaborate discussions. For example, the stories of the Prodigal Son and the Good Samaritan make the truth plain, vivid, and commanding. They are descriptions rather than definitions or debates.

The learners.—They were of all kinds. Little children heard Him gladly; old men listened eagerly. Tired toilers stopped to take in His words; rich men asked Him to dinner. He had a message for every one.

The results.—Those who became Christ's disciples found that their lives were changed. The truth began at once to do something with them. They did

not receive merely a new set of ideas from Jesus; they found a new way of life in listening to His words. The whole content of their relation to God and to one another was changed by what they learned from Jesus. The old scenes and duties remained; but the disciples of Jesus became new actors in the midst of old engagements. The result of learning in the school of Christ was a new practical life.

SERMON THREE

In preaching the third sermon in this series we propose to present the claim of Christ as the moral Master. He demands a transformed moral standard; He insists upon action on new and higher ethical levels. This is the peculiar characteristic of the truth that He taught: it demands that we do something with it; it changes our lives; it works moral transformations.

We think first of all of the way in which the message of Jesus differed from that of the religious leaders of His day. They were constantly insisting upon some refinement of the ceremonies or the detailed legal conformities which were supposed to determine the religious character of a man. And Jesus went instantly far beneath all this and discovered the underlying motives of life. He wasted no time in fruitless discussion of the externals of life. He wanted men to act from the right motives that produce the true life.

A suggestion for this sermon may come from the following quotation:

“ It is not too much to say that the very warp and woof of the ethical life of the contemporary man comes from Jesus. Even the man least friendly to the Church, even the man least responsive to the ministries of religion, cannot avoid looking upon multitudes of problems of right and wrong through the eyes of Jesus. This is true because the eyes of Jesus have become the eyes of civilization itself. And all the while, in ages bright and in ages dark, individual lives have been moulded and refashioned by the influence of Jesus. A multitude which no man can number has found the way into purity and integrity and brotherly love through the power of the Man of Galilee. In the darkest ages He has produced white lives. . . . Slavery went down before the spirit of Jesus. Every reform has received wings of power from Him. The great movement for making the lot of all workers fairer and more secure has a pressure back of it from the spirit of Jesus which many men have never realized. The movement for more democratic government has had an ally in the thought of every man as a possible son of God through the touch of Jesus Christ which has undermined slavish political conservatism and has hastened the coming of the new day.”¹

¹ Lynn Harold Hough, *The Productive Beliefs*, 1919, p. 106.

Jesus the Moral Radical

For from within, out of the heart of men, evil thoughts proceed (Mark 7:21).

Jesus went to the root of the moral and spiritual life in His teaching. His claim was asserted upon the ruling motives which actuate us in daily life.

Jesus affirmed the primary importance of purpose.—The old law dealt with actions; Jesus, with the ideas and purposes that inspire them. Jesus dealt with causes; the law, with effects. Jesus demanded a transformed life; the Pharisees, a conformed life. The conduct and character demanded by the law were mechanical and superficial; Jesus called for radical changes of purpose and a vital religion.

Jesus proposed a supreme standard.—Men were to be good as God is good and because God is good; loving as God loves. The standards of the Old Testament seemed high and difficult to reach; the standard proposed by Jesus was higher and more difficult. This makes it challenging and attractive; we are won by the fact of its difficulty to attempt to reach it. No other program of living compares with that which Jesus sets before His disciples.

Jesus provides resources to help us attain His standard.—This makes Jesus and His message different from any other teacher or truth. Other ethical and religious masters and systems propose ideals and standards; but they leave their disciples without help in attaining them. The Christian Gospel brings with it a new, resident energy which reinforces our highest human powers in our struggle to reach the standard set by Jesus. God takes a part in the problem. Help comes to us from the unseen.

God breaks through. We are furnished with fresh troops. We may not be able to explain it; but we can feel and know it. It is a fact in our consciousness. There are millions of witnesses to it. God does not mock us with the definition of a purpose that we may never attain. With His help we are bound to win our battle.

SERMON FOUR

The purpose of the fourth sermon is to present the claim of Jesus the Man, Teacher and Moral Master upon us. It is taken for granted that we cannot come into the presence of such a character without feeling the demand that it makes upon us and desiring to respond to the upward pull of it.

The great principle that lies in the background of the sermon is that every friend and every situation exerts upon us a definite influence either for the lower or the higher. There are some friends and some situations that depress and degrade us; we may not be keenly conscious of the fact, but the influences are silently and ceaselessly at work. On the other hand there are comrades and circumstances which elevate us. They lay a silent claim upon all that is best in us and call it into action. We cannot remain the same in the presence of these invigorating forces.

The greatest single energy that can possibly act upon our moral and spiritual resources evoking their response to all that is good and noble is the Personality of Jesus. In the presence of His im-

perial claim it is impossible to remain neutral or to allow ourselves to be passive if we are conscious and alert to the meaning of His life and message. Jesus lays His strong hand upon us and claims us for a higher life than the one we are living now. The best way in which to prepare for this sermon is for the preacher himself to feel this demand and to yield himself to it in a new dedication of spirit. The sermon that has power on this subject will grow out of a preacher's enriched experience of the truth. We do not need to make an inventory of our literary resources, but rather to increase our own spiritual resources.

An interpreter of the character of Peter has written:

“Beyond high aims and burning enthusiasm it is not easy to say precisely what Peter saw in Christ. But we are sure to love the highest when we see it, and it is a common experience that we yield to the magnetism of a personality when explanations are altogether beyond us. It is not so much the doctrine of Christ that masters us as it is the story of His life; and while we are baffled by His nature and must continue to be we are conquered by His love.”¹

Christ Claims Us for the Highest Life

Thou art Simon the son of John: thou shalt be called Cephas (which is by interpretation, Peter) (John 1:42).

¹ Albert J. Southouse, *The Making of Simon Peter*, p. 11.

There is something better in us than we have yet realized.—We are two persons: the one that is and the one that we may become. This “potential better” and “possible best” is our true self. The task of life is to bring this out into complete expression.

Christ claims the best in us.—Peter was only a fisherman to the people who knew him; he was a great, durable *foundation-man* to Jesus. Thus Jesus always sees the best in every one. He claims us for our highest life. We may decline to yield to this claim; but we dare not ignore it. Certain comrades bring out the worst in us; Christ always evokes the best in us.

Christ joins forces with us to enable us to realize our highest life.—It is possible to catch so lofty a vision of life that we are disheartened by it. The challenge is so great that we lose hope of attainment. But Jesus does not leave us there. He is with us and on our side from the beginning.

The new character.—When Simon had become Peter he had not simply added more of the qualities of old Simon to his character. He had added Christ. The equation of his life was Simon+Christ=Peter. The same change may take place in us. The old self+Christ=the new self. That which has been added in the process of development has been the very Person of Christ, actually entering into our thoughts, feelings, and actions, and helping us to realize our highest life.

Our response to the claim.—It is therefore supremely important that we recognize Christ's claim upon us, yield to the mastery of His motives and spirit, and work in friendly partnership with Him to accomplish His purpose for us.

SERMON FIVE

We must now show in what ways it is possible to establish vital relations with Christ, whom we think of as living although invisible and within spiritual reach of every one who will respond to His claim upon them for the highest. We must show that there are ways of approach and acts to be performed or we shall leave the whole matter in the realm of the mystical and unreal. This relation with Christ is as actual an experience as is the beating of our hearts.

The approach to this subject is through psychology, which is a long and technical word to describe what we know of the way in which the non-bodily part of us works. We do know how a great friendship is established and maintained; we understand how a child becomes a member of the family group, not merely by his physical presence in it, but by the way in which he blends his own purpose with that of the family as a whole, and thus becomes the possessor of his true rights and privileges as a child.

Now it is clear that the most important fact about any human being is not the physical conditions in which he lives, his personal appearance or social prestige. The supreme matter is the motives which steadily actuate him in his daily conduct; it is his dominant desires and his ruling purposes. These really count in determining the worth of a person to himself, his family, society,

and God. This group of motives from which a person acts habitually is called by William James *the habitual center of his personal energy*. It is, essentially, his religion, which Carlyle said was the principal fact about any man. Now when the group of ideas from which one acts habitually center in loyalty to God and Christ we are Christian. When that set of ideas escapes to the region of the dim and unreal instead of remaining warm and vivid at the center of our habitual action, we have suffered a commensurate loss in our Christian life. When no such set of motives has swayed us habitually we are not Christian. When we take the ruling motives of Jesus and deliberately place them at the center of our habitual action and hold them there we are Christian. The rise and fall of our Christian experience is determined by the loyalty and conscious deliberation with which we put the motives that ruled the life of Jesus at the center of our "habitual center of personal energy."

This involves, it will be readily seen, a moral and spiritual union with Christ. When we are "motivating" our actions habitually by His ruling motives we are one with Him in the spiritual purposes that swayed Him in daily life. In this way He is *in* us, as He promised that He would be. And we are *in* Him, as becomes our privilege when we yield ourselves to Him in such a personal union of purpose as we have described.

This is a general description of *what happens*

in the beginning and development of the Christian life; but it is not and cannot be a full account of the forces at work in the accomplishment of the mighty change in purpose and character which makes up the whole process of conversion to Christ and growth into the likeness to His character and spirit which is the goal of the Christian experience. We know that there are deeper energies at work; we cannot analyze them or classify them fully. But for practical purposes this surrender to the mastery of the motives of Christ is the step that opens the way for the following experiences in which the relationship of loyalty to Him is completed. It shows us what we may do on our side to avail ourselves of the new life in Christ.

The Master's Motive Our Master Motive

Have this mind in you, which was also in Christ Jesus (Phil. 2: 5).

How shall we respond to the claim that Jesus the Man, the Teacher, and the Moral Master makes upon us? By acting constantly from the motives which controlled Him habitually.

The importance of motives.—William James said that the group of ideas to which a man devotes himself and from which he works habitually, not spasmodically, is the most important fact about him. It is the habitual center of his personal energy. George Bernard Shaw said that what a man believes may be ascertained, not from his creed, but from the assumptions on which he habitually acts. Therefore

the way into moral and spiritual union with Christ is to make our own the "group of ideas" from which He acted habitually.

The Master's motives.—At least three are clear: Jesus was constantly sure of the love, nearness, and care of the Father God. No failure could shake Him from this working principle. He was true to it "as the needle to the pole." It was more real to Him than the dusty roads or the boats on the lake. Again, Jesus never failed to have faith in His fellows and to believe in the worth of life. He was no cynic, no pessimist. There was no selfish motive or mood in Him. He gave Himself in boundless love and service to others and He helped them so much because He believed in them so greatly. Again, He had perfect confidence in the final full triumph of His Cause. He was sure that man could finally be brought back to the Father from whom his sin was separating him. He was sure that the Kingdom of God, which He proclaimed and to which He gave His life, not only was worth while but that it would surely conquer the world in the end. He gave up His life when He was a young man; but these great working convictions He never abandoned.

Accepting Christ's motives.—Can we act habitually from such high motives as these? Yes. They are as valid now as they were when Jesus lived in Galilee. They are the very foundations of the moral and spiritual universe. If they seem reasonable, if our affections are warmed toward them, we need only to choose them resolutely and firmly act according to them and we shall experience the new life in

Christ. This is the great choice by which we become Christians.

SERMON SIX

We now reach the point at which we must bring out the distinctive item of faith that rests upon Christ as its object. It is clear that when He was living with His friends in the intimate contacts of daily duties He made the relation that they bore to Himself the dominant fact in the relations of disciple and Teacher. He did not ask men to accept truths about Him or even principles that He taught; He asked them to become loyal personal friends to Himself. He tested men by the character of their allegiance to Him. Now the same conditions obtain. We cannot see Christ; but we can know the full value of His friendship as we identify ourselves with Him by adopting as our own the personal motives according to which He acted habitually.

Remind yourself again how true it is that the sweet and blessed friendships of life do not insistently demand physical contacts; some of the holiest comradeships that ever have been known have been almost entirely in the realm of the invisible. And it is precisely as reasonable to cherish a friendship with the Christ whom we may love unseen as with a friend to whom we may be loyal in spite of separation.

We think now of a love and devotion that has

existed since girlhood between two women. They have not seen each other for half a century. It is altogether likely that they might pass each other on the street and neither recognize the friend of the long ago. But the beautiful loyalty has grown rather than diminished as the years have run swiftly by. They have not written many letters; they have seldom exchanged greetings through mutual friends. All this has not been necessary; they loved each other; years ago they promised that they would forever be true to each other whatever life might have in store for them. And they have kept the faith.

This is a poor parable of the way in which Christ may become the object of a personal devotion that nothing ever can extinguish. The writer of the text which we are to unfold was sure about this experience. He admitted at the outset that it was loyalty to an invisible Friend; but he insisted that the allegiance was none the less real and profitable. He got deep satisfaction out of it. It brought him nothing less than the salvation of his soul.

Christ the Object of Love and Faith

Jesus Christ: whom not having seen ye love; on whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory: receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls (1 Pet. 1:8, 9).

The unseen but living Christ, whom the disciples

knew and trusted, is still the object of love and faith and the source of our salvation.

The unseen Christ is the object of love.—Every one who responds to the appeal of nobleness and beauty of soul loves Jesus of Nazareth. He was all that is admirable in His relations with others. What He was when He was living on earth He must be still in His eternal life. Therefore He is still the highest object of our affection, even if we do not see Him or talk with Him.

The unseen Christ is the object of faith.—Men gave their utmost loyalty to Jesus of Nazareth; they “left all” to follow Him. They did not defend a theory about Him; they yielded their lives to Him. The unseen, living Christ is worthy of a similar surrender of life to Him. We accept what He tells us to be true and we give ourselves up to loyal allegiance to Him.

The unseen Christ is the source of joy.—The disciples of Jesus of Nazareth were happy. Others saw this and were attracted to them by this fact. Humanity yearns for happiness. It is eager for joy. The unseen, living Christ still has power to come into our hearts, homes, and all our social relations and give us the deepest joy and satisfaction. The consciousness that we are united with Christ in the supreme motives of life gives us a kind of happiness that no other source can possibly provide.

The unseen Christ is the ground of salvation.—When Jesus of Nazareth lived in Palestine He brought a new vision and standard of conduct to those who loved and trusted Him. It was a new life, as if He had created them again. He helped men realize

God's purpose for them. Thus He saved them from their sins and into wholly new realms of thought and action. The unseen Christ still does this for us when we love and trust Him. A higher set of ruling motives is permanently established at the center of our habitual action. Thus Christ becomes Saviour and Master.

SERMON SEVEN

What is the very essential truth or fact of the Christian religion? We seek not those doctrines or experiences which Christians *share* with those who belong to the other great religions of the world, but rather that which is *distinct* and *peculiar* to Christianity. As we press our search we find that there are many respects in which the religions of the world are one; but there are certain respects in which each one is distinct. The distinctions may generally be reduced to one or two. If we try to bring the essential and the distinct character of the Christian religion into one item it may be stated thus: Personal relations, invisible but most real, between living persons and Jesus Christ, loved and obeyed as Saviour and Lord, which issue in a transformed life for the individual and society. That is, the true Christian religion consists essentially in an experience. It is a relationship, a friendship, a loyalty between persons. Jesus did not simply live and die in Palestine centuries ago. He lives and bears personal relations to us now.

He did something unspeakably important *for* us by His perfect life and sacrificial death on earth in physical relations with living men and women in the past; but He is doing something unspeakably important *with* us and *in* us by His invisible presence and power in spiritual and actual relations at this very moment if we will join our wills with His to let Him accomplish His purpose for us. This is the fact of the Living Christ which ought to be the most wonderful and commanding truth that the Christian minister preaches.

Into this sermon we must put all the insight and passion at our command. All the preceding sermons have led up to it. It must not be simply a mystical treatment of the subject. Back it up by evidence. Make it concrete. Start with the text. The man who said that the very center of his life was Christ was alive to his finger tips. He did one of the most virile and constructive pieces of work that any man ever accomplished. He had the mind and the practical genius of a modern captain of industry. He was a statesman and builder.

Then draw on all the resources of Christian biography. Use Livingstone and Mary Slessor. Call into the witness box teachers like Mark Hopkins; business men like Samuel B. Capen; the wonderful type of young Christian students like Hugh McA. Beaver; the men and women rescued into a new life, like the characters in Harold Begbie's *Twice Born Men*, *Other Sheep*, and *Souls in*

Action. The testimonies must be brief and direct, for the time is short. But there are millions who will confirm the statement that Christ has become for them, not a doctrine but a Friend, not a theory but a Saviour.

The Living Christ Our Constant Comrade

It is no longer I that live, but Christ liveth in me (Gal. 2:20).

The Christian life is a ceaseless friendship, an actual comradeship, between the soul and the unseen, personal Christ.

Physical presence is not essential to the highest friendship.—It is highly desirable. It is the condition of the vast majority of our human friendships. But it is not absolutely essential. The highest relations of life are maintained on the plane of spiritual sympathy, union in noble purpose, and the fusion of ideals in the supreme quest of life.

Jesus promised continued comradeship with His disciples.—His death separated Him from His friends; but He prepared them for this separation by the definite promise to be with them in spiritual union. "And lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." "I in them, and thou in me, that they may be perfected into one." This was more than vague spiritual influence; it was such a personal comradeship that those who experienced it could be sure of it.

Millions of men have attested the experience.—The records of the race show that Jesus' promise has been realized in millions of cases. It is just and

logical that we should believe that the ground of this experience is what the Christians have said it was, the positive union of the personal Christ with themselves as living beings. They have not been able to explain it; but they have affirmed it and have confirmed their testimony by their life and, often, by their death.

This fact satisfies our deepest yearnings.—We know that we hunger and thirst for the satisfaction of spiritual desires. We cannot live by bread alone. And Christ comes into the eager heart with a peace and joy that cannot be described or defined. He meets the deepest desires of the spirit for certainty and power. We know what help sometimes comes to us from the great inspiration of a human friend. All this derives from Christ when we meet Him in the intimate union of the spirit.

SERMON EIGHT

We have proceeded thus far to present Christ as the one living Lord and Master, since He is the revelation and the reality of our Christian faith and practice. We now go on to lay the basis for the full realization of this religion.

There may be preachers who prefer to begin with the more general fact of religion and to bring the subject of Christ in after the disaster of sin and the meaning of salvation have been discussed. In this case, sermons one to seven could be used logically after sermon eleven, and the sermon we are now describing could be used as number one.

Having shown that Jesus Christ is the Fact and the Doctrine of the Christian religion, we now go back to the fundamental proposition that a religion of some kind is the possession of every person. It may be most vague; it may seldom rise into consciousness; but it is there and it exerts ceaseless influence in daily life. Note carefully the method of approach in this sermon. It does not come at the congregation with a criticism or attack. It is positive and conciliatory. It begins by revealing to every hearer depths in his own nature of which he may not have been aware. It tells men, not that they are renegade or void of native and noble impulses; it reveals the yearnings and the answering hearts of men in a way that encourages them to respond to the voice of God. We shall come to the fact of sin soon and shall stress it with all our power. But we start with the possibilities and the encouragements in the situation. This is good pedagogy and good pleading.

We connect this sermon with those that have preceded by bringing out the primacy of Christ as the Word of God to the yearning souls of men. Therefore the method is logical.

This universal yearning for God was put in the familiar words of Longfellow's *Song of Hiawatha* as follows:

“ Ye whose hearts are fresh and simple,
Who believe in God and Nature,
Who believe, that in all ages

Every human heart is human,
That in even savage bosoms
There are longings, yearnings, strivings
For the good they comprehend not,
That the feeble hands and helpless,
Groping blindly in the darkness,
Touch God's right hand in that darkness
And are lifted up and strengthened;—
Listen to this simple story,
To this Song of Hiawatha!"

Religion Inevitable

When thou saidst, Seek ye my face; my heart said unto thee, Thy face, Lord, will I seek (Ps. 27:8).

Religion is the soul's instinctive and inevitable response to God. It is a part of every normal life. It exists whenever God is made a conscious factor in one's environment. It is a communion with the Divine.

How has God spoken?—In nature, in which He clothes Himself with a living garment and through which shines His beauty and power. In human experience, as it is reported and recorded in history and literature. The past is not the record of chance events but the register of God's purpose for our highest good. In our inmost souls, where in our highest and best moments we are conscious of the reality and movement of something higher than ourselves. Finally, God has spoken to us in Christ, the Word of the Father. In that perfect life and matchless character we hear most clearly God's voice speaking to our yearning and answering spirits.

How shall we answer God's voice?—First, by seeking in every possible way to hear it more clearly. We must keep in touch and tune with the holiest and noblest facts and forces in the universe and open our hearts to the great avenues of revelation noted above. The highest answer to God's voice is the happy and constant obedience that we render to every truth we know or discover. When we make the revelation of the Father's will the supreme law of our daily life we discover still more fully the meaning of His purpose. Thus an obedient life becomes "an organ of knowledge." It is like a musician learning to master his instrument; only as he practices constantly and gives himself up to the art that he is seeking to acquire will he become the skilled musician. The way to seek God's face is to yield our lives to the doing of His will with full devotion. Religion is learned by doing, as are all other great endeavours of life.

SERMON NINE

It is apparent that no religion can be satisfactory or enduring that does not rest upon a clear idea of God. This does not demand a definition of God; but it calls for some kind of a description of His character that will furnish the basis of our hope and confidence in the relationships which compose the experience of religion. The Christian Gospel finds the adequate description of God in Christ.

This represents a new appreciation of the revelation of Christ. The Christian Church has been

eager to publish the fact of the Godlike Christ. It must also proclaim the Christlike God. It has been put in the following words:

“How He [Jesus] strove to present the vision of the heavenly Father in terms of moral character and human experience, not absolute philosophy and metaphysical definition. If you want to know what God is like, look at me! He said: ‘He that hath seen me hath seen the Father.’ What did He mean by that? Not that He, Jesus, was like God, but that God was like Him. . . .

“Jesus said: Read me into God. So far as man can know and understand Him, what I am He is like. In short, it was in the terms of human experience, moral and spiritual, experience, not of *a priori* reasoning, that He declared men could best approach Him. How modern and intelligible that sounds. The characteristics of Jesus are not imperial power, absolute understanding, for all His intellectual subtlety and courageous and acute dialectic. He is greatest in His moral splendour, His ethical sublimity, and if we speak of Him, and of His God and Father, in these terms, we are on comprehensible grounds.”¹

This statement, however, that God is like Jesus, or that the Gospel is concerned with a Christlike God, must not be stressed to such an extent that we lose also the idea of the Almighty Father.

¹ Albert P. Fitch, *Can the Church Survive in the Changing Order?* 1920, p. 66.

Clearly the God of whom Jesus was aware every moment was the Infinite and the Adorable. Our Gospel gathers around the idea of a great God; nothing less than this ever will issue in a great salvation and a great religious experience. We use the phrase "a Christlike God" to make the thought of God clear and sublime. Be sure that the God of Jesus was a Sovereign Lord before whom we bow our hearts in reverence and adoration.

What is God Like?

He that hath seen me hath seen the Father (John 14:9).

For centuries men have defended the proposition that Jesus is like God. Now we are learning also that God is like Jesus. We come to the Father through the matchless human consciousness of Jesus. There we find out what God is like.

How can we see Jesus?—Not with our physical eyes, since He lives no longer on earth. But we may see Him in the reports of His life and words as they are given to us in the New Testament. By the use of our imagination, picturing Him vividly, we may see and understand Him. Also by observing the results of His influence upon men now we may come to sense His life and character. But most perfectly by yielding ourselves to His service we feel His presence and power upon us and understand Him.

What we discover when we see Jesus.—Complete moral integrity. There is no sense or taint of fault in Him. His most common acts bear successfully

our closest inspection. Perfect service to the needs of the world in which He lived. There is not a single failure to give His best to every human need as He perceived it. Perfect love for all His fellows marked His human life. He realized completely all the most exacting requirements of the Sermon on the Mount and the Golden Rule.

God is like what we discover in Jesus.—God is good. His moral integrity is the warrant for all human goodness. God desires the highest welfare of all His children. He gives us nothing less than Himself in order that this may be realized; He takes a part in our development into the character that He desires for us. God is love. He loves us in spite of our sins; He loves us out of our sins; He loves us into a new life that must finally conquer all sin and weakness. God is nearer to us than the very beating of our hearts. God is the chief factor in our surroundings and the supreme item in our consciousness. God was all this to Jesus; He can and will be all this to us. Our highest name for God is “the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

SERMON TEN

We now run straight into a universal human experience which calls for our utmost insight and skill in understanding. Why does not the Father God of Jesus win an immediate and unqualified response from the yearning soul? Why does not religion become at once the dominant and blessed experience of every human being? It is due to the

fact of sin, which in some form holds us all in bondage and which must be forgiven and eradicated if we are to enter into abundant life with God.

Preaching on sin has always been one of the difficult tasks of the pulpit, not because the fact is not apparent, but because it is difficult to set it out in such terms as will bring conviction and penitence to men. We suggest the following approach to the subject. (The terrible character of sin is due to the worth and beauty of that which it destroys.) For example, if one were to spill ink over an old mop-cloth it would not be a serious matter. But if one were to pour the same amount of ink down the length of an exquisite lace dress the destruction would be irreparable. It was the same ink in both cases; the difference in the havoc wrought was caused by the worth of the fabric involved.

If two beasts in the jungle fly at each other's throats and one of them dies it is not a terrible loss to the highest life of the human race; but when Booth shoots Lincoln the disaster is beyond estimate. The difference in the quality of the life involved makes the difference in the character of the act.

Now this is the way in which to get a true conception of the meaning of sin. It is because the soul of man is so precious and its preservation in all the wealth of it so imperative that the thing that

destroys *it* must be fought and exterminated. It is claimed that we have lost the old intensity of attack upon sin, that the perils of hell are no more dwelt upon in the pulpit, that we are so urgent in our statement of the love of God that we have made Him an indulgent "grandmother." If this is so, the way to a recovery of the old emphasis is through a fresh appraisal of the worth of man and the divine value of human life. By as much as we exalt the worth of the soul do we intensify the peril of that which destroys it. So a true sense of sin must come from a fresh emphasis upon the priceless and eternal worth of that which it destroys. Concerning the havoc that sin brings about in the individual and in society there is no doubt. Therefore sin is the awful and ultimate enemy of mankind.

The deadly damage that sin does in the soul is well illustrated by the following paragraph from *Men in War* by Andreas Latzko:

"I remember a trip I took before the war from Munich to Vienna on the Oriental Express. I looked out upon the autumnal mellowness of the country around the Bavarian lakes and the golden glow of the Wiener Wald. But across all this glory that I drank in leaning back on the comfortable seat in luxurious contentment, there steadily ran an ugly black spot—a flaw in the window-pane."

That is the way in which sin, deep and deadly,

rooted in our nature, degrades everything to the quality of the background that it makes, warps all the beautiful landscape of life and twists into ugly contortions the fair shapes of a world that would be surpassingly harmonious without the flaw.

Sundering Sin

For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God (Rom. 3:23).

Why do we fail to answer when God speaks? Why do we not quickly and completely respond to the Father whom we discover in Jesus? It is due to the fact of sin, which sunders us from God.

Sin is universal.—In its grossest forms we are aware of it and shrink from it. It finds expression in hate and robbery and lust. But even those whom the world regards as saints are also most keenly conscious of their sins. The literature of the Christian people reveals this deep penitence for the sins that make Christ mourn. Sin clutches all human life in its fell grasp.

Sin is disobedience to God's will.—This is not a definition of sin but the description of one of its most apparent aspects. We ought to live habitually under the reign of God's will of perfect love. This demands our obedience. Its purpose is our highest welfare. To thwart that purpose is to miss the true aim of life. The New Testament word for sin means "to miss the mark," that is, to lose the highest achievements of life by disobedience.

Sin is selfishness.—Another fundamental aspect of sin. It consists in preferring our own interests

to those that are higher, either the will of God or the welfare of our comrades. It refuses to accept social obligation. It acts either from pure selfishness or the "herd instinct" rather than from the motive of unselfish love which Jesus made the supreme law of the Kingdom of God. So it makes us cold and vain. It narrows the range of life and kills all altruism.

Sin is destruction.—Such a selfish and disobedient motive destroys all the finer responses and powers of the human spirit. It cripples our own loyalty to the motive of sacrifice, which has developed all the noblest traits of humanity. It injures others, whose well-being is in our keeping and whose welfare we ought constantly to seek. It sunders us from God, whose moral demand cannot be satisfied by a sinful life. If the disaster goes on unchecked life swings into growing chaos and ruin. Is there any way of escape?

SERMON ELEVEN

Now we are ready for the full publication of the good news that there is a way in which man, whose sin has sundered him from God, may be brought back to right relations with the Father. In preparing for this sermon the preacher may saturate his mind with the Parable of the Prodigal Son, as it is reported in Luke 15: 11-32. We have already noted this in Chapter I. It is so familiar that it seems almost unnecessary to cite it again as the great expression of the Gospel in story form. But the very fact that it is so familiar makes it all the

more necessary for the preacher to review it and to dwell upon it so reverently that he will sense again its wonderful meaning. It was one of the focal points in the preaching of Phillips Brooks, who used it repeatedly and who found in it the most illuminating expression of the message and the mission of Jesus. It will reveal new meanings constantly as we reflect upon it. It is one of the most exquisite and forceful stories in all literature. And the greatest truth that ever has been given to humanity is perfectly enshrined in it.

The point to be kept clearly in mind is that nothing was necessary to be done to the father to change his attitude toward the boy who had gone off into the far country. Any objection to the word "reconciliation" is perfectly met by the conditions set forth in the parable. We have heard the idea of reconciliation criticized severely on the ground that it involved a *mutual* change of disposition and relationship. But no fair consideration of the gospel of reconciliation as it is presented in the New Testament can possibly warrant this criticism. It is not the father, gazing eagerly down the road day after day with his tired eyes longing for the sight of his returning boy, who needs to have his heart changed; it is the boy at his miserable business in the far country who must have a new heart. And when that came he set out for home; the reconciliation was brought about in the arms of his forgiving father.

Good News

God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself (2 Cor. 5: 19).

This is one of many interpretations of "the Gospel." The meaning of this word has become so frayed and worn that its early meaning is almost gone. To its early users it was a kindling and holy word. What does it mean?

God and man, sundered through sin, may be reconciled.—God's love is strong enough to find a way to the citadel of man's will and change its supreme decisions. Selfishness can be overcome, lawlessness can be conquered, and the course of life, which has been missing the mark, can be so changed that its true objective will be reached. Thus man may be brought back to God. This is good news.

This reconciliation is wrought through Christ.—God wanted to prove His love for man and His purpose to save him from sin. So God took on, or clothed Himself in human form in order that His compelling love and saving purpose might be clear beyond doubt. Christ is the world's Saviour. In Him alone is the way to a new life. That way is easy to find. This is good news.

By trust and obedience we receive the reconciliation.—On our part we must trust the good news so fully that we yield ourselves to it. We must believe to the extent of personal loyalty. Obedience to the good news means that we make it a way of life. The Gospel comes with a command. It calls for changes in conduct. Thus the ruin of sin is repaired. This is good news.

The reconciliation is for the whole world.—Not for a selected group of persons; not for a particular race or religious class; not for humanity alone, but for all the world. The scope of the Gospel is the reach of all creation. This is good news.

SERMON TWELVE

When Jesus told the story of the sower He was labouring under a deep concern for the result of His message in the lives of the people who were crowding around to hear Him. He knew that the result would be conditioned by the way in which they heard His words and understood their deep meaning. He wanted to have them understand and respond; but this would depend upon the attention that they gave, the kind of ideas with which the truth in His message was able to connect, and the response by appropriate action that they returned to the message.

Precisely the same conditions obtain now in any community where the preacher of the Christian Gospel is publishing the good news. He will get varied responses; and these responses will determine the results of the message in the lives of those who hear him. This is the warrant for a sermon at this point on the right response to the Gospel. The Parable of the Soils furnishes the best of texts for this purpose.

Our warrant for this sermon lies in the fact that, while the soil of the field, which Jesus used for an

illustration of His great principle, was quite powerless to change its character, the human mind can be changed by the action of the person himself. The hard and shallow and preoccupied soil was no more responsible for its condition than was the fertile ground. But men and women can change the character of their response to the claim of the truth. This must be borne in mind as we prepare the sermon. Every parable breaks down somewhere, and all analogies which attempt to describe human life according to that of the lower kingdoms in nature fail at the point of volition.

Therefore this sermon must lay great emphasis upon the power of the individual to control the influence of the truth upon him. There is a cowardly tendency in all men to shift the weight of personal responsibility upon either heredity or surroundings. It is undoubtedly a fact that our response to truth is conditioned upon our inheritance and our circumstances; but on the whole we are equipped to bear the responsibility of making decisions and we can choose the loyalties which will master our lives. We are able to decide for Christ. Make this option clear in the sermon and press for the decision of the supreme question which every individual is able to make for himself.

Parable of the Soils

Who hath ears to hear, let him hear (Mark 4:9).
What kind of a response will the good news re-

ceive? This depends on the kind of mind with which we attend to it. Jesus set forth this truth in the story of the four kinds of soil into which the good seed of the Gospel fell.

The hardened mind.—Like the pathway, beaten down by daily work and the pressure of heavy burdens. No response to deep appeals or high enthusiasms because the mind has been rendered inert through ceaseless pressure by the beating of routine labour. We must break up the hardened areas of life by cultivating imagination and vision.

The shallow mind.—Like the rocky soil with thin earth over the ledge, responds quickly to any stimulus. Easily moved by an emotional appeal. Cannot carry out its decisions in sustained action. No reliance to be placed upon it for permanence or endurance. Deceives through its lack of power to "carry on." We must train the will so that it will make *permanent* decisions. Strengthen our resolution and persistence by holding on stubbornly when we might easily let go.

The preoccupied mind.—Like the soil, full of the old roots. As soon as natural conditions cause the seed to sprout the old brambles appear and the young plants have no chance. We are congested with interests and activities in these busy days. We allow so many to take up our time and strength that the supreme matters are crowded out. We must discriminate more carefully and put first things first.

The fertile mind.—The larger part of the field is good soil. It responds to the seed with the resources which cause it to spring into life. The Gospel tends to find root; to grow steadily; to yield fruit. We

must increase the fertile areas. We must coöperate with God to make our life rich in Christian fruitage.

SERMON THIRTEEN

The right response of the mind to which the Gospel is addressed is the act which we commonly give the name repentance. At this point in the publication of the good news in the community, therefore, we ought to consider what this action is and how radically it involves all the powers of the personality.

It is most accurately described in the words "a new mind." But we must define carefully what we mean by "mind." It is a word of vital significance in the vocabulary of the Christian religion. We have discussed it in sermon five. There we saw that it does not mean merely the set of ideas with which our minds are furnished, but rather the set of motives according to which we act habitually. The ruling purposes of daily living are the real content of the "mind" as we use it here in reference to repentance.

In preparing this sermon we must stress the place that the will occupies in the process of repentance. It is a clear conviction, backed by a profound feeling, and all cast into a resolute decision that issues in a complete change in the motives which ordinarily govern our conduct. This makes repentance an act of such thoroughgoing intention

that it brings nothing less than a shift in the center of interest and desire. It places new objects before us as the goal of endeavour. It is revolutionary in the deepest sense of that word.

G. H. C. MacGregor has a clear study of repentance in his little book *Into His Likeness*. He describes the legal call to repentance in the familiar words, "Amend your *ways* and your *doings*." This is the command of the law. But there is a deeper call than this, which is characteristic of the New Testament. It was "uttered first in its fullness when our Lord, taking up the Baptist's work, proclaimed, 'The Kingdom of God is at hand; repent ye, and believe the Gospel.' It concerns itself with the inner thoughts and feelings. It strikes at the life ere it manifests itself in action. It keeps close to the etymology of the Greek word. It cries not, 'Change your actions,' but 'Change your *minds*.' It does not say, 'Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain'; it says, 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart.' It does not say, 'Thou shalt not kill'; it says, 'Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.' Its demand is not so much 'Do new deeds,' as 'Act from new principles.' I call it evangelical, because it springs out of that doctrine which is the foundation of all evangelical religion: 'Except a man be born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God.'"

Therefore repentance means a change of mind toward God, toward duty and also toward Christ.

We must think differently about sin. We must not only hate it but we must also with the deepest resolution turn away from it. This includes also a change of mind toward the Saviour from sin. It means that we are ready to let Christ do something for us. This involves a fundamental decision. We shift the whole balance of our life to the side of a new set of ideas which govern us habitually in our conduct. Toward this decision the sermon should point the congregation.

A New Mind

The goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance. (Rom. 2:4).

Sin separates men from God. The Father's mighty love, revealed in Christ, brings him back. This involves a deep, inward change, *repentance*. What is it?

Negatively.—It is not simply sorrow for the fact that we are caught in the mesh of our sin and disgraced. Repentance sometimes goes no deeper than this. No lasting change results. It is cowardly.

It is not simply sorrow for the wrong act or motive that led to the act. This is deeper than sorrow for consequences. It tends to hold us from committing the same wrong act again. Not radical enough.

It is not simply a resolution not to cherish the evil motive or do the wrong act again. This is a necessary part of repentance; but it is not the root of it.

Positively.—Repentance involves a complete change of mind or ruling purpose of action. It re-

verses the scale of values according to which we have acted in the past. It is the resolute decision to regulate our conduct by a new set of principles. Repentance sets new objects before us and enthrones a new series of positive purposes at the center of our habitual activity. The word for repentance means *a new mind*, that is a complete change in the fundamental convictions with which we do regular business in the control of daily life.

God's goodness leads us to repentance.—We are not frightened or forced into this new way of living. We are won to it by the compelling power of the love of the Father. God's goodness is the one final force that makes us good.

SERMON FOURTEEN

We follow up in sermon fourteen the central idea in the discussion of repentance, namely, that it is an act of such profound and inclusive meaning that it involves a practical dedication of life to a new set of ideals and principles. This calls for surrender or obedience.

The first impression made upon us by the idea of surrender is not a happy one. It stands for the yielding of our liberties; and this is something that does not find ready consent. Therefore the principle to be cleared up in our thinking is that the path to the largest freedom is through the acceptance of obligation. It is summed up in the familiar words describing the Christian life of loyalty

to Christ, "whose service is perfect freedom." How can service, which must consist in yielding to obligation and devotion to practical efforts of ministry, be consistent with freedom and actually result in the highest freedom? This is one of the paradoxes of life; but there is no truth that finds more constant confirmation in our daily life than this. We see it illustrated in our homes every day. The member of the family who accepts the common purpose of the group and makes it most fully his is the one whose life in the home is the freest and happiest. Take so apparently trivial a matter as getting out of bed promptly, sharing the fellowship of the family cheerfully at breakfast, and going about the day's duties in the right spirit. This seems to be the path of surrender; it is actually the only path to freedom.

It is like the planets in the solar system. Their beauty and permanence are the result of the yielding of each to the ordering pull of gravitation. Each does not go its own way; but all go the ways that together make up the "system" of the planetary universe.

The tyrant Nero tried to degrade some of the great Roman nobles to as low a level as his own, by making them appear as actors in the arena on the stage. To disobey was death. Florus was bidden thus to appear, and, doubting whether to obey, consulted the virtuous and resolute Agrippinus. "Go, by all means," answered Agrippinus. "Well, but,"

replied Florus with astonishment, "you yourself refused to obey." "Yes," answered Agrippinus, "because I did not deliberate about it." The categorical imperative, the naked, absolute imperative of duty must be implicitly, unquestioningly, instantly, obeyed. To deliberate about it is to be secret traitor; and the line which separates the secret traitor from the open rebel is thin as the spider's web.

Obedience the Test of Love

✓ *Why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things that I say? (Luke 6:46).*

It is easy to announce one's loyalty by one's words. The final act of allegiance consists in obedience with the changes in conduct and character that issue from it.

Obedience is the universal test of life.—In mastering the world we must obey its laws, as a child learns to walk by conforming to the laws that govern the physical world. In study we must obey the principles learned and the propositions proved in order to make progress. In industry, as we learn a trade we use the skill acquired as the means of further advance. In personal friendship we always have to submit ourselves to the needs and desires of others in order to make the friendship strong and lasting. In moral relations it is not enough to know what is right; we must *submit* to the right and do it. So in the Christian life obedience is the test of love and the condition of growth.

Christ commands us.—Jesus is an Example; but He

is also Lord and Master. Christ brings new laws to govern the daily life of men. These principles make a practical demand upon us and effect a difference in our behaviour. It is serious business to follow Christ because we must yield ourselves so completely to the principles which He proposes. We must give ourselves up to Him in the joy and devotion of a personal surrender.

Obedience is the supreme item in our confession of Christ.—Words are easily spoken. It is not difficult to unite with others in an institution or to carry out a program of religious activities. The test of all our theories and creeds is the kind of life that issues from them. They are the inspiring sources of action; but the action itself is the proof of the quality and power of the principle. The community rightfully demands that we shall not only reflect but repeat the spirit and the conduct of Jesus. We cannot do this unless we yield ourselves completely to Him. What did He say about the cultivation of our personal character; our daily dealings with men; our practice of justice; our willingness to follow Him to the limit? Are we obeying our Master's commands in these and other respects?

SERMON FIFTEEN

Few religious ideas are more constantly misused than the conception of faith. It is commonly made to connote the acceptance of something that is unreasonable and even absurd. It is set over against reason and one is asked to choose whether

he will be governed by his rational faculties or his credulity.

But as a matter of fact faith is trust in an object which is worthy of confidence although it may not be capable of proof or demonstration. Faith is essentially an act of the whole personality in which we commit ourselves to the object defined by the faith. It is what Horace Bushnell called "the faith of a transaction." This great preacher set the matter forth so clearly that we quote from his sermons.

"The Christian facts are stored in history, and are scarcely more significant to us than if they were stored in the moon. What is wanted just here in the case of Christ, and what also is justified and even required by the facts of His life, is a faith that goes beyond the mere evidence of propositions or propositional verities about Christ,—the faith of a *transaction*; and this faith is Christian faith. *It is the act of trust by which one being, a sinner, commits himself to another being, a Saviour.* It is not mind dealing with notions or national truths. It is what cannot be a proposition at all. But it is being trusting itself to being, and so becoming other and different by a relation wholly transactional.

"If a man comes to a banker with a letter of credit from some other banker, that letter may be read and seen to be a real letter. The signature also may be approved, and the credits of the drawing

party honoured by the other as being wholly reliable. So far what is done is merely opinionative or notional, and there is no transactional faith. And yet there is a good preparation for this; just that is done which makes it intelligent. When the receiving party therefore accepts the letter and intrusts himself actually to the drawing party in so much money, there is the real act of faith, an act which answers to the operative or transactional faith of a disciple.

“Another and perhaps better illustration may be taken from the patient or sick person as related to his physician. He sends for a physician just because he has been led to have a certain favourable opinion of his faithfulness and capacity. But the suffering him to feel his pulse, investigate his symptoms and make the diagnosis of his disease, imports nothing. It is only the committing of his being and life to this other being, consenting to receive and take his medicine, that imports a real faith, the faith of a transaction.”¹

This is the aspect of Christian faith that we seek to present so clearly that it will no longer appear as simply the assent to something undemonstrated by the mind, but an act in which the whole being is committed to a new relationship with Christ.

Faith That Saves

By grace have ye been saved through faith (Eph. 2:8).

¹*Sermons for the New Life*, p. 94.

When we speak of "salvation by faith" we mean only that faith is the means by which the result is realized. The source is the gracious love of God. We are put into relations with this source, however, by the act of faith.

Faith involves an idea about Christ.—In analyzing the complex act of faith we cannot always affirm which factor comes first; but all are present in the complete transaction. There is an approval of the claims of Christ by our minds. He has created a favourable impression upon us. A decision to follow Him seems logically valid.

Faith involves a feeling toward Christ.—Our emotions follow our minds. There is a warmth and glow of feeling. Christ seems to be lovely. He is desirable, like any object that has evoked our love. This draws us toward Him. We are happy in the approach.

Faith involves a decision for Christ.—The will approves by a positive decision what the mind has accepted and the feelings have desired. This decision embraces the whole personality and commits one to a personal relationship. It is often called "the faith of a transaction." It is trust. It calls for loyalty. It is like the highest human friendship of which we are capable.

Faith grows through experience.—Faith is like all vital experiences; it develops and is perfected through its exercise. The faith of maturity is not the faith of childhood. Courage and confidence come from the exercise of faith. It is necessary to trust more fully in order to have the power of trusting increased.

SERMON SIXTEEN

In the sixteenth sermon we come to the matter of an open confession of allegiance or loyalty to Christ. In preparing the sermon we will think through the fact that Jesus has a claim upon us which we simply cannot ignore or decline to consider. It has been put in the following way by P. Carnegie Simpson in *The Fact of Christ*:

“The more we candidly keep our hearts and minds and consciences open to the impression that even an historical appreciation of the fact of Christ makes upon them, the more does that impression turn to moral issues within us. We had thought intellectually to examine Him; we find He is spiritually examining us. . . . We study Aristotle and are intellectually edified thereby; we study Jesus and are, in the profoundest way, spiritually disturbed. The question—apparently so innocently historical and morally non-committal—of ‘What think ye of Christ?’ passes into the most morally practical and personal of questions: ‘What shall I then do with Him?’ And this presses for an answer. . . . A man may study Jesus with intellectual impartiality; he cannot do it with moral neutrality. If the words, the character, the person of Jesus at all awaken within us such issues as these, we cannot go on, nor can we even leave off, as if they never had been raised. Such questions, once raised, do have their answer; to try to ignore

them is an answer as real as any other. And thus it is that, as I say, we are compelled to take up some attitude toward this fact of Christ."

Therefore the purpose of this sermon is to make clear the inevitable decision which must be reached by any one who faces the moral and spiritual claims of Jesus. It must appear that to postpone a decision or to ignore a decision is really to make one, since neutrality is impossible and the whole issue is too great and urgent to be allowed to go by default. There are some truths that are so imperative that they must be met and action in reference to them settled; this fact of Christ and His mighty claim upon our love and service is such a truth. The sermon on Confession of Christ must be filled with this urgency and keyed to the note of confident expectation that when men actually face the claim of Christ they will yield to it.

True to the Colours

Every one therefore who shall confess me before men, him will I also confess before my Father who is in heaven (Matt. 10:32).

Open loyalty is a practical test of love. Our "confession of faith" is the affirmation of our loyalty to Christ and His Kingdom. He asked His disciples to be true to their standards.

Why should we confess Christ?—In order to define our position before our comrades. The world has the right to know where we stand in reference to the supreme problems. A "trimmer" never is re-

spected. We must prove our loyalty to Christ by expressing our allegiance to Him and recording ourselves as champions of His Cause. Our confession sets a standard toward which we strive and therefore gives us precise aims and positive purposes.

How shall we confess Christ?—By our loyal words. Men estimate our loyalties first by what we say. Therefore it is the right thing to speak out boldly our inmost loyalty to Christ. We prove the reality of our words by our conduct. Therefore our actions are confessions of faith. When we do what Jesus commands out of loyalty to Him we are true to the colours. Then we confirm our loyalty by the personal and specific service that we render to Christ, especially in introducing others to Him as Master. The first disciples were made in this way. We could not try to bring others into an allegiance in which we ourselves had no confidence. The greatest need of the churches now is a more constant and loyal testimony to Christ on the part of His disciples.

What are the results of confessing Christ?—It defines and strengthens our own faith and practice. When we openly take a stand for any truth we are clarified in our thinking and sustained in our practical duties. The best way to appreciate any idea is to make some positive statement and perform some service in its behalf. Open confession is the surest proof of the claims of Christ upon others and the greatest human influence to lead them to Him. Other disciples are always made as a result of brave and loving testimony. Open confession gives the highest honour to Christ as Saviour and Lord. When

we stand squarely for Him and speak and act boldly in His behalf we show Him the highest honour. Loyalty is the key to the Christian life.

SERMON SEVENTEEN

Up to this point we have been concerned with the presentation of the Gospel as a message and the way in which it is to be appropriated through the yielding of the whole personality in a new relationship with the living Christ. This acceptance of His motives as ours marks the beginning of a life that is so new and beautiful that Paul in sheer joy called it "a new creation." The best description of this experience is to call it the "Christian life."

Like all forms of life, therefore, the Christian experience is subject to the laws of development. There is an ideal toward the realization of which it steadily works.

The briefest statement of this supreme objective of the Christian is to say that we seek to be conformed to the character of Christ. Christians can be fully satisfied with nothing less. We shall devote two sermons to the definition of the goal of the Christian life; but both are simply an enlargement of the proposition that the Christian is to seek to become like his Master.

In preparing these two sermons the preacher will keep clearly in his mind the value of the objectives that we must deliberately set out to win in life.

"Life toward a clear-purposed goal," Matthew Arnold called it. Such a definition of the dominant purpose of life is imperative if we are to succeed in making our work in the world count.

The best way in which to make this Christian ideal vivid and commanding is to show how it has actually been the objective and the passion of Christian men and women ever since the time when Paul defined it for the first time. A conspicuous example of this is Arthur Frame Jackson, who died in China in 1911 when he was only twenty-six years old, giving his life for the people during a terrible attack of plague. The Viceroy, a follower of Confucius, said concerning Jackson:

"We have shown ourselves unworthy of the great trust laid upon us by our Emperor. We have allowed a dire pestilence to overrun the sacred capital. His Majesty the King of Great Britain shows sympathy with every country when calamity overtakes it; his subject, Dr. Jackson, moved by his Sovereign's spirit, and with the heart of the Saviour, who gave His life to deliver the world, responded nobly when we asked him to help our country in its need."

To this wonderful tribute from the official, Dr. Jackson's biographer adds:

L "To me the remarkable fact about these tributes is this—that they all get behind his sacrificial act to the central fact of the Christian religion. The eyes of these men were opened, and they saw an-

other Man, and He was on a Cross. 'Thus in a day Christ Crucified was preached to millions, for the eyes of China were upon Moukden at that hour.'¹

There are scores of similar illustrations to be found. The essential Christian ideal is being realized now as it has been steadily from the beginning. We are too slow to bring the evidence forward in its convincing power.

The Christian Ideal of Life

And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and all discernment; so that ye may approve the things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and void of offense unto the day of Christ; being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are through Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God (Phil. 1:9-11).

This was Paul's ideal for his friends in Philippi; but it is still an adequate ideal for the friends of Christ.

Abounding love.—This is the first essential for the Christian life, as it has been from the beginning. Christ was the resistless and undiscouraged Lover of men. His disciples must follow Him in this respect. We must love abundantly; love all kinds of persons; love at the cost of service and sacrifice. This is the spirit **and** habit of the followers of Christ.

Knowledge and discernment.—Christian love is not ignorant or reckless. It calls for knowledge and

¹ Alfred J. Costain, *The Life of Dr. Arthur Jackson of Manchuria*.

discernment or insight. Each is necessary to the other. The surest way to know is to love; the best way to love is to use insight and wisdom. Love is saved from sentimentality by wisdom; wisdom is saved from coldness by love. Wisdom is the substance of our acquired knowledge; discernment is the accurate vision into the true character of life that is given us by love.

Approving the excellent.—Ordinarily we waste a vast amount of time and energy on things that are not worth while and let more important aims go by default. The Christian ideal approves those purposes which are excellent and so makes our labour rewarding. The way in which to decide what is worth while is to see how Jesus lived. That which He sought is worth our seeking.

Righteous.—Three aspects of Christian righteousness are defined: Negatively, it consists in being void of any valid charge of evil. This is good so far as it goes; but it is merely negative. Therefore, we seek the positive life, which is full of the fruits of right living. Finally, this righteousness is not something that we gain by struggle; it issues from our allegiance to Christ.

Bringing glory and praise to God.—The Christian life does not seek its own honour and praise alone; it seeks to yield honour to God. If this is achieved our reward is sufficient.

SERMON EIGHTEEN

Christian salvation has been regarded as the putting of a warrant into one's hands by which he

would be assured a blessed eternal life. This is a poor and inadequate conception of what it means to be brought into a new life through faith in Christ. It is a development, lasting through all the years of our earthly living and demanding for its completion the life immortal. It is a movement into the larger achievements of Christian enterprise, the pursuit of a "flying goal." It is a growth.

Prof. Luther A. Weigle has given the following description of growth in the Christian life:

"How shall we describe the natural growth of religion in a human life? It seems almost an impossible task. For religion is more than a natural growth. It is a living, personal relation with God. It cannot be described in terms merely of 'laws' and 'periods of development.' It depends upon God's uncounted, resourceful ways, as in love and mercy He seeks to reach the minds and hearts and to enlist the wills of His children. And it depends upon their ways—ways sometimes reasonable but often ignorant, capricious and self-willed—to which He adapts His measures of redeeming grace. The growth in the soul of real religion—as distinguished from pious convention—is a matter supremely individual. One touches here upon the inmost secret of each separate life.

"In a general way, three stages may be distinguished through which most persons pass as they grow in religion. There is the stage, first, of nur-

ture in religion and learning about religion; second, of getting religion as a conscious personal possession; third, of using and understanding religion in maturing Christian service and experience. Characterizing each by a single phrase, we may speak of the stages of Christian nurture, Christian decision or conversion, and Christian experience. The first stage corresponds in general to childhood; the second, to adolescence; the third, to mature life.”¹

In these sermons we have not dwelt upon the matter of Christian nurture in childhood, having in mind the second item, conversion, and especially those who have passed the adolescent time, to whom we have been seeking to bring the Gospel as a message of new life. We are now seeking to define the standards and discuss the aspects of that Christian experience which follows the surrender of the will to the claim of Christ as Saviour and Lord.

Growing a Soul

But grow in grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ (2 Pet. 3: 18).

The Christian life, like all life, is subject to the law of growth. We *are* Christians; but also we are *becoming* Christians. This text shows us not only the *end* but the *sphere* of Christian development, the grace and the knowledge of Christ.

Grow into a deeper knowledge of Christ.—Read, study, and think about Him. Imagine Jesus as He

¹ *Talks to Sunday-School Teachers*, 1920, p. 93.

lived with His friends in Galilee. Reflect on His actions. Ponder His teachings. Make these real and concrete. Compare them with the words and deeds of Christians now.

Try to make yours the knowledge that Jesus possessed.—He knew more fully than any other man who ever has lived the truth about God, about man, and about their right and normal relationships to one another. We can master this necessary knowledge only as we obey the principles contained in it.

Grow into the Master's gracious life.—Jesus was the most unselfish, loving, and gracious Comrade who ever lived. "Manners make men." We must behave as He did in our contacts with our fellows. If the world could rise to the level of the chivalrous life of Jesus the day of the Kingdom of God would break.

Grow into the grace of Christ's personal sacrifice.—The grace of Christ does not appear alone in His courteous life; it is the very substance of His spirit and motive. Christ gave Himself without reservation to all mankind. He showed unmerited favour to all mankind. This involved sacrifice. The grace of Christ appears in the cross. Until we rise to the height of personal sacrifice for the Master we have not attained the grace of the Master.

SERMON NINETEEN

There has been endless discussion especially within the past generation concerning the individual and social aspects of the Gospel. On the one hand have been the defenders of the proposition

that the salvation of the individual soul was the goal of Christian preaching and of the work of the Christian Church; on the other hand line up the champions of the claim that the world is the subject of redemption and all preaching and church work are designed for the salvation of society. Two books of comparatively recent date represent these two accents or programs:

The Social Gospel and the New Era, by John Marshall Barker. *The Individualistic Gospel and Other Essays*, by Andrew Gillies. Both books were published in 1919; both are by well-known members of the Methodist Episcopal Church. Each is clear in the note that it sounds. Prof. Barker affirms that "the superlative duty of the Church is to teach a correct notion of the Kingdom and keep it alive in the hearts of men. The conception should never fall below the social vision of Christ. The Church is to help shape the mind of the world about the Kingdom ideal." Dr. Gillies cites the work of Wesley with approval, showing clearly that "a great deal that is made primary to-day was made secondary by him because he was convinced that the only way to bring these reforms to pass was to get individual men soundly converted, and that the only way to get hardened sinners and smug hypocrites converted was not by an altruistic appeal, but by a solemn summons to get right with God."

Now what might seem to be a sharp difference

here resolves itself into no difference at all when we bring the matter into the light of the radiant character of Jesus. The text that we take for the sermon unites the two accents perfectly. Begin at either side and you come to the other. Suppose we seek to save the soul of the individual; it cannot be accomplished apart from the fellowship of comrades. Suppose we try to save the community: it is impossible apart from the service and devotion of a group of saved men and women. So the two processes go on mutually strengthening each other. Individual and social salvation are seen to be two sides of the one truth. The coin has two sides; each is necessary; both make the complete coin. The apparent contradiction is thus perfectly resolved in the life of Jesus, the great statement of whose purpose in life is found in the text that follows.

The Purpose of Christian Character

And for their sakes I sanctify myself (John 17: 19).

There has been wide discussion as to whether the Gospel is designed for the individual or for society. In this verse Jesus reveals His own attitude toward His life and answers the question as to the individual and social values of the Kingdom of God. Both are involved; there is no essential conflict between them.

The duty of self-development.—The word translated “sanctify” means to *perfect* or to *make whole*. Jesus thinks of Himself as the Son of God whose

sacred obligation is to make Himself complete in every possible way. In one sense of the word this is a doctrine of unrelieved selfishness or of the self-hood. It contemplates one's self as worth every possible effort in the way of self-culture or development. It insists upon the supreme worth of the whole personality, body, mind, and spirit. These are to receive constant attention and culture in order that the individual may become perfect or complete. The most powerful instrument that God can use to make the world what He designs it to be is perfected and consecrated human personality. Such development of completeness of personality is impossible, however, without the discipline and culture of service to others.

The duty of service to others.—A perfected personality that is not employed for an unselfish purpose may be a curse instead of a blessing. So Jesus perfected His own life in order that He might give it lavishly for the good of others. All gains in individual character are for the purpose of using them in a wider ministry to others. It is the intention of the gift that warrants the struggle to possess it. So we do not ask merely what a gain in Christian character *is*; we ask what it is *for*. If it is for the welfare of our comrades and for the highest good of the community we are warranted in seeking it with all our strength. This constant and beneficent reaction goes on all the time in the building of Christian character: Do we want to serve our age? Then we must perfect ourselves. Do we want to perfect ourselves? Then we must serve our age for we can reach perfection in no other way.

SERMON TWENTY

The idea which we are to bring out in sermon twenty is that the Christian life is a beautiful harmony of singing virtues, a chorus of qualities which is prepared and trained and renders the very music of God in an earthly life. The first step in the preparation of the sermon is to grasp the full meaning of the figure used in the text. It comes from a people who loved music and who knew what was involved in selecting the singers for a chorus, in training them, and then, under the direction of the leader, in rendering a great composition.

Study carefully the meaning of this interesting and illuminating analogy as it is seen in the work of a modern orchestra or chorus. In the first place the Christian character is more beautiful and satisfying than any other fact or experience in life. No oratorio or symphony is so rich in all loveliness, so elevating in its influence, so strong in its uplift as a true Christian character. The Christian life has sometimes been regarded as a stern and unlovely experience; but it is the contrary. The character of Jesus is the proof that the normal Christian way of living is full of strength and beauty.

Now study the assembling of the Christian virtues. This is one of the highest privileges that can come to us. We are given the duty of calling into being and expression the finest, noblest qualities of

the human spirit. No chorus leader ever was permitted to assemble such select and beautiful agents for the expression of a great musical theme. Then note the way in which the various qualities are unified and balanced. Just as a great chorus must have enough but not more than enough singers for the different parts, so the Christian character consists in a balance of qualities which insures harmony in the rendering of the music.

Then review the matter of the discipline or the training of the assembled parts to the chorus. How much must be done to modulate the loudness of some and to increase the strength of attack and tone on the part of others. Time and again the score must be rehearsed and every time the trained ear of the leader will discover some point at which more practice is necessary.

But the most important item in the figure is the music that is to be rendered by the harmonious life. The great privilege of repeating the majestic music of the character of Jesus is given to us. There is no other vocation or possibility that can compare with this. It is the supreme privilege of existence. This fact ought to inspire us with the determination to live well as never before.

The Chorus of Christian Character

Yea, and for this cause adding on your part all diligence, in your faith supply virtue; and in your virtue knowledge; and in your knowledge self-control;

and in your self-control patience; and in your patience godliness; and in your godliness brotherly kindness; and in your brotherly kindness love (2 Pet. 1: 5-7).

The verb translated "supply" means to "furnish and train a chorus." It involves all possible skill and diligence and patience. It is like gathering, rehearsing, and conducting an orchestra. These eight graces of Christian character—an octave—are to be furnished by the disciples of Christ.

Faith.—We begin here logically. By our voluntary trust we come into a league of love and loyalty with Christ. Faith is not a single, finished act; it is a constant attitude and activity of the spirit.

Virtue.—This refers to the tested strength and proved powers of the soldier. It is gained in the process of struggle. It can be relied upon because we have won it under stress.

Knowledge.—This is the practical fruit of experience. We do not gain it from books or theories; we attain it in the great school of experience. Christians are always learners.

Self-control.—This is another word for *temperance*. We must know ourselves and master ourselves. This is the first step in knowing and mastering the world around us.

Patience.—This extends self-control to the whole of life and makes us long-suffering. It takes time to lift a continent. God is patient in making the world; we must be patient in making our character like that of Christ.

Godliness.—This is the true name for goodness. The highest manhood is divine. We propose the

noblest ideal to ourselves when we seek to become like God. This is the highest reverence.

Brotherly kindness.—Every one is fighting a hard battle. The souls of men need kindness. True brotherhood defines the sort of kindness that we are to show to others. This issues from our knowledge and experience of God's Fatherhood.

Love.—This is the inclusive and crowning virtue of the Christian life and character. God is love; this is the reason why we are to love others. No other point of view will reveal our duties to others as love will show them.

These eight qualities of Christian character we must assemble and train and use in complete harmony. They will render God's music.

SERMON TWENTY-ONE

In this sermon we are to take up the message of Christ to the physical life. The Gospel has something to say to the physical man. It does not contemplate saving the soul and letting the body go. It means the salvation of the physical man.

By this we do not mean to claim that the Christian experience insures the healing of all wounds or the assurance of freedom from disease. We mean that the Christian is a better insurance risk and that on the whole health comes with the deepening of the Christian life. The gifts of Christ are peace and joy; these are directly concerned with the whole matter of physical well-being.

Back of this sermon must lie a clear idea of the Christian view of the physical body. It is not an enemy of the spirit to be crushed; it is the helper of the spirit when it is rightly regarded. We do not think that the body is to be scourged; we think that it is to be developed and disciplined until it shall be the instrument and temple of the immortal spirit. As Josiah Strong once said:

“There cannot be a high intellectual and spiritual growth without an adequate physical basis. Man is the most perfect animal in the world. It was the highest physical organism which received the double crown of intellectual and spiritual life. In human experience, the higher is conditioned by the lower, as the superstructure is limited by the foundation. But it is quite possible to develop the lower life at the expense of the higher. The splendid physique of the prize-fighter does not imply a corresponding intellectual and spiritual development, but quite the contrary. As an animal, he is admirable; as a man, he is monstrous.”¹

Therefore our emphasis is to be on the value of the physical as the basis of the spiritual. The body is to be cultivated and honoured rather than neglected or despised because it is the warrant for all advance in the mental and spiritual achievements of man. There are some conspicuous examples of superb attainments in spite of physical limitations; but in general it is the person who has a clean and

¹ *The Twentieth Century City*, p. 13.

strong body who can do the best work for Christ in the Kingdom of God.

The House of Man's Soul

Or know ye not that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit which is in you, which ye have from God? and ye are not your own; for ye were bought with a price: glorify God therefore in your body (1 Cor. 6: 19, 20; see also 3: 16).

The Gospel is good news to the whole of life and therefore it has a message to the body. It does not despise the physical; it exalts it as the organ of the spirit and the temple of the divine. How shall we treat our bodies as the temple of God?

The honour we pay the temple.—A sanctuary is the place which we honour both for its own sake and for that which resides there. The body is the spirit's sanctuary. Every organ and function is to be highly regarded on this account. The highest respect that we can pay the spirit is to provide for it the cleanest and most beautiful temple possible.

The care we take of the temple.—We must give ceaseless care to the building of the temple that it may be strong enough to serve the needs of a strong and deathless spirit. The soul is here to do great deeds; it must have an instrument fitted to this end. We must take great care to keep the temple clean. Nothing coarse or vulgar has the right to be there. No foul thought or base motive may be allowed to take its place in this physical temple. It must be made beautiful with every possible adornment of loveliness. The spirit is exquisitely beautiful; its house must be of the same kind.

The services rendered through the temple.—We speak of the “services” in a church or temple. This indicates the real business of the body; it is to serve the needs of the spirit as it in turn serves the needs of the community. The whole business of the body is summed up in this idea of service. When the body is being used by the spirit rather than existing for itself it is discharging its highest function. Therefore we think first of the resident spirit. What use is it getting out of the body? Is our physical equipment of such a kind that the spirit can express itself without hindrance through it? If not, how can we change the relation so that we shall make our bodies the residence and the agent of the spirit?

SERMON TWENTY-TWO

Since the Christian experience is a part of the whole life of the individual who is living in relation with the complete world where he perfects his life, it must be subject to the tests and trials of that world. It cannot claim immunity from the common lot. If it should it would miss one of the principal sources of its power and growth. *Temptation* is only another name for *test*. And tests are of the utmost importance for the proving of the worth of anything.

The subject of this sermon, therefore, is the place of test or temptation in the development of the Christian life and the place of God in our testing. It calls for a clear idea of the method of de-

velopment and the power of God in the growth of the spirit. In other words, God does not make us complete Christians all at once by an act of miracle or magic. He takes time. The process is the same as that by which we make advances in the cultivation of our physical or mental powers. Take the familiar example of the training of the athlete. It is necessary for the candidate for an athletic team to submit to all kinds of tests and training. The readiness with which one is ready to surrender his private interest or his selfish desire is the first indication of his fitness to be a candidate for the team. And his initial act of surrender to the training and denial must be followed by a series of tests that will last all the time he is in the particular group to whose success he yields his individual taste or desire.

Or think of the way in which we acquire an education. The test or examination must be successfully met during the entire time of discipline. Oral and written examinations are only the necessary test by which we determine our mastery of the truth which we are seeking to grasp. They are sometimes irritating; but they are vitally necessary, at least in some form.

This lays the foundation for the reasonableness and the kindness that are both involved in temptation. It is God's way of testing us. Therefore a temptation is, in a real sense, a privilege. It is no sin to be tempted; the sin can be only in the yield-

ing to the temptation. This we need not do if we will give God the place in the struggle that Jesus has promised that He will take. It is the purpose of this sermon to show what that place is and to enable us to meet our tests as Jesus met His.

Temptation—And God

There hath no temptation taken you but such as men can bear; but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation make also the way of escape, that ye may be able to endure it (1 Cor. 10: 13).

The function of tests in the realization of the Gospel life.—Tests are imperative in building and manufacture. All materials are proved before they are built into enduring structures. In mathematics and logic we demand that propositions shall be subjected to proof. In the development of life according to the form and laws of the Gospel we make the same demand. Tests ought to be welcomed and their results used. Temptations are tests; they prove the worth and durability of the materials of Christian character.

The endurance of tests.—Tests involve strain and suffering. They call for the utmost resolution, patience, and courage. They are not welcome at the moment. How are they to be met? Not by seeking to avoid them. No problem is ever solved by running away from it. Face the temptation squarely. All difficulties generally look largest at a distance, as a hill appears steepest before we

actually begin to climb it. A determined stand is the only Christian way in which to submit to a test.

God's part in our tests.—At the moment when we seem nearest the point of breaking God comes in with help. Millions of witnesses confirm this statement. They have fought until it seemed as if they must surrender, and then, at the moment when defeat seemed inevitable, something has broken the power of the temptation. Energy from God has rushed in, reinforced their feeble powers, given them the help they needed. We can rely upon God. He will not fail the soul. Strength will come to match the trial.

SERMON TWENTY-THREE

The Great War has given an added impetus to discussions on the subject of prayer. The whole question was thrown into prominence by the practical situation in which millions of people were involved; they prayed against the coming of the war and they prayed for victory; they prayed for the safety of their friends, and often it seemed as if their prayers were idle mockery. What did it all mean? What was the use of prayer?

On the other hand there appears as never before the soundness of the fundamental principle that prayer is of the very nature of religion. The statement of William James at the conclusion of his *Varieties of Religious Experience* is more than ever timely and true:

“ 1. That the visible world is part of a more spiritual universe from which it draws its chief significance;

“ 2. That union or harmonious relation with that higher universe is our true end;

“ 3. That prayer or inner communion with the spirit thereof—be that spirit ‘ God ’ or ‘ law ’—is a process wherein work is really done, and spiritual energy flows in and produces effects, psychological or material, within the phenomenal world.”¹

In preparing this sermon let us emphasize certain factors in this statement of Prof. James in our own minds. Prayer is the noble name for the whole range of communion between the soul in man and the Eternal Spirit which we call God, and which, as Christians, we name the heavenly Father. It does not consist simply in certain formal acts; it is the entire attitude of the personality in reference to God; it is every expression of love and service as well as words and postures. It is communion.

And in this communion work actually gets done or energy is released and applied to specific ends. This is what Sir Oliver Lodge calls “an engine of achievement.” We must be sure that through prayer “more things are wrought than this world dreams of.” It is not simply a satisfying emotion or experience. God joins forces with man through prayer to accomplish the great ends of the divine

¹Page 485.

will. He adds strength to us. He breaks through with power for our help. It takes great faith to be sure of this; but there are unlimited proofs of the reality of the finding of Prof. James in his great study. What we need in our present bewildering generation is to be sure of this fact and act upon it with joy. Put this confidence behind the people in this sermon.

Prevailing Prayer

The supplication of a righteous man availeth much in its working (Jas. 5:16).

Prayer is communion between the soul and God. It has as many forms of expression as a human friendship has. Sometimes it is silent, consisting entirely in the joy of "togetherness." Sometimes it is audible, consisting of praise and adoration and petition. It always is a vital and beautiful part of the Christian life, the "vital breath" and "native air" of Christian experience.

The righteous man's prayer.—While men pray because they are good, they also are good because they pray. The promise of achievement in the life of prayer is not indiscriminate and unconditioned. It is realized fully by those whose life merits the blessings that flow from communion with the Father. Just as a child's fellowship with his earthly parents is made profitable in the end by the character of his relations with them, so the life of prayer depends for its rewards and satisfactions upon the rightness of our life.

The gradual results.—Note the phrase, "in its

working." The results may be delayed. They may not come as swiftly as we could wish. God takes time to bring about the results which we desire. It is necessary to enter into partnership with Him and to share the long processes by which His great ends are gained. This tests and trains our patience and endurance. It is desirable. If everything were accomplished in a moment we would not receive the discipline that is necessary for our highest welfare.

Prayer an engine of achievement.—It finally "availeth much." Prayer does actually get results. We may not be able to explain this; but in some way through communion with God union is effected with the higher powers outside ourselves and energy comes in to give the resources we need in the endeavour to lead the Christian life. It is like the result that is derived from a talk with some one stronger than ourselves when help is actually given to match our need. We do not wait perfectly to understand all the reasons that warrant the action. We simply take the help that is offered and thank God for it.

SERMON TWENTY-FOUR

When the lawyer asked Jesus the test question reported in Luke 10 he received an answer from the Bible and then a story from real life. This is one of the most wonderful of all the parables, the tender and searching story of the Good Samaritan. The inmost meaning of this we are to interpret in sermon twenty-four. It shows us

the grounds of true brotherhood and the meaning of Christian service. It leads in the end to the conception of human life which is summed up in the noble phrase, "The Beloved Community." Concerning this a recent book says:

"Jesus sought to lead His followers on to the full stature of the perfect man and woman. Therefore He set before them the ideal of the beloved community. It included all who, like themselves, were intent upon doing the will of God. These Jesus implied were not only His but their brothers and sisters and mothers. This beloved community was the larger family, capable through their united efforts of unlimited expansion, to which He directed their supreme devotion and loyalty. Jesus sought to build up about each individual an eager, kindly, fraternal group, ever growing until it included all members of the local community. In this each found not only friendship, sympathy, and help but ample opportunity for self-expression and growth through service. This was the only type of church that Jesus ever founded. It was the family ideal expanded until it included all members of the local community who were responsive to the feelings of brotherhood and then expanded again until it bound together, through common loyalties, all men of all races who accepted Jesus' principles of living. Like a mother bird, He longed to gather all of the scattered sons of Abraham under His enfolding wings. The Gospel of John also

reminds us that the great Shepherd had sheep not of the Jewish fold under His care.”¹

This is the inevitable conclusion to which the Parable of the Good Samaritan leads. It may not be wise to stress the universal application of the story strongly in the sermon; but no preacher can handle it accurately and draw out the full values in it unless he works from this fundamental place that the beloved community held in the thought and action of Jesus. The simple incident on the Jericho road, told with such exquisite sense of its application to individual life, is universal in its application. To give this impression is essential to the purpose of this sermon.

Who is My Neighbour?

Exposition of Parable of Good Samaritan (Luke 10: 29-37).

The cynical question that called out the story. The telling force of the answer; not a discussion but a story, the meaning of which admitted of no debate and enforced the truth with wholesome directness.

The wounded man.—In the unsettled condition of the country the event would be readily understood. This hurt, plundered man stands for every kind of human need that is constantly pressing upon us. Sin has robbed men of their treasures and left them hurt and bleeding along all the highways of the world. They need help; they need neighbours.

¹ Kent and Jenks, *Jesus' Principles of Living*, 1920, p. 101.

The priest.—His business was the representation and administration of religion. Mercy and helpfulness were his function. The care of bleeding men should have been the very technique of his daily life. He saw the wounded man but apparently did not even break his walk. He passed along on the opposite side of the road.

The Levite.—He also was trained in the exercise of religion. The ceremonies were the object of his study and devotion. He would not have conducted one inaccurately; a stickler for form. He saw the wounded man plainly. But he did not stop to help him.

The Samaritan.—Remember that Jews and Samaritans were bitter enemies. Their ancestors had quarreled; that was enough to keep the quarrel hot for centuries. This Samaritan had every racial prejudice against the Jews. He might have said, "Good enough for him! There is one less Jew to abuse me and my people." But this Samaritan was a true neighbour. He did not inquire for names and relationships. He broke his journey; got the wounded man on his horse; took him to his own room; watched the man personally; took the responsibility of providing him a room and board. He stands for the true neighbour who will never give up a permanent relationship of love and service to any needy soul anywhere at any time.

SERMON TWENTY-FIVE

This sermon is based on the fundamental idea that we cannot complete our Christian life apart

from the fellowship with others which is absolutely necessary. No person can be a Christian alone; we require one another to perfect our life in union with Christ on earth.

The great realm of this fellowship is the Church, which is here represented as an organism or corporation of Christ. This is St. Paul's definition of the Church and no more satisfactory one ever has been given. Concerning this conception of the Church Bishop Charles H. Brent says:

“The Church has a visible body; it is an organism rather than an organization; there is one Body and one Spirit. It is perhaps rather difficult to make clear the difference between an organism and an organization, but there is a difference which is fundamental. An organism is a unitary form; life is inherent in it and energizes and permeates it fully. An organization is an assembling and co-ordination of congenial elements, a communicating of life as the life. Organization is, so to speak, manufactured. The family, the nation, and the Church are all organisms, and every voluntary association, such as the Christian Association, for instance, is an organization. The Church is the only eternal society, and all voluntary associations, if they fulfill their complete functions, pour their life into the Church, finding their highest and fullest realization in giving themselves in all their completeness to the Church. . . . Man is not body alone: body without soul is corpse. Neither is he

soul alone: soul without body, is ghost. Man is body and soul.”¹

Now what the soul is to the body of man, that the living Christ is to His body the Church now on earth and forever in union with Him in the unseen world. This figure is one of the most clarifying symbols which we could possibly use to make clear the eternal value and the present importance of the Christian Church. There is no theory or doctrine of the Church that ever has been framed that lets us into its very inner meaning so surely and completely as this. The more the preacher ponders it the more he will see its consummate and revealing beauty. The sermon will grow swiftly around this central figure.

The Living Church

The Church which is his body (Eph. 1:22, 23).

This is a description of the Church according to an analogy which we all appreciate and understand. The Church is at this moment the organism, or group of living persons, in whose daily life the purpose of Jesus works so radically that it gets its will done through them. We note:

The unity of the Church.—Just as any living plant or animal is a diversity of organs unified and controlled for a common purpose, so the living Church is composed of a great number of persons and programs, united and directed by the unseen Christ, resident within them. The ground of unity in the

¹ *The Inspiration of Responsibility*, 1915, pp. 98, 100.

living Church is the will of Christ. It is working to accomplish its purpose now as it did when Jesus lived in Palestine; only it now uses a vast number of living persons as it then used His physical body and His comrades in daily life.

The diversity of the Church.—The highest organisms are those which have the greatest diversity of organs blended into a common purpose, e. g., the wider the range of variety the greater the usefulness, provided they are fused in a common purpose.

The Church and its environment.—The organism derives its sustenance from its environment, which it serves in return. The organism exists for the environment. The Church has the right to expect support from the community; the community has the right to demand service from the Church.

Organ and organism.—This alone insures a living Church. Life must animate the organism; Christ must animate the Church. Only thus can it function in its environment and reproduce its own life.

SERMON TWENTY-SIX

There are many ways in which to describe the Christian life. It is so varied that figures and illustrations of many sorts are required to set forth its characteristics and activities. Among the interesting and picturesque descriptions of the Christian experience are the two figures that we have taken for the text of the twenty-sixth sermon.

Only one caution is necessary. In developing a sermon from an illustration or likeness we must remember that no figure ever can be pressed into details without its failing at some point. "No example can go on all fours." So the preacher must select those factors in the figure that are essential and which bear upon the subject to be interpreted by the analogy and hold steadfastly to them in his treatment of the proposition. Whatever we say about the citizen and the athlete must be valid in its application to the Christian life and experience. Not many items are to be brought forward; those which are selected must be carefully handled; their bearing upon the proposition must always be legitimate. Beware the temptation to rush into fanciful comparisons; never let details clutter up the treatment of the analogy. We are trying to make an unfamiliar truth plain by the use of one that is familiar. Confusion comes from too many "points."

Citizens and Athletes of the Gospel

Only let your manner of life be worthy of the Gospel of Christ; that, whether I come and see you or be absent, I may hear of your state, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one soul striving for the faith of the Gospel (Phil. 1:27).

The meaning of the text is clarified by two figures: the word translated *let your manner of life be* means literally *act as a citizen*; the word translated

striving for means literally *being an athlete*. To be a Christian means to be a citizen and an athlete for Christ.

Citizens of the Gospel.—Consider the *rights or privileges* of Gospel citizenship. Membership in the commonwealth of Christ involves the right to know God; the Father is discovered and appropriated through Christ. It involves the privilege of knowing what right is and how to do it; we derive our moral insight and energy from Christ. It involves the right to immortal life; the commonwealth of Christ embraces earth and heaven. Consider the *duties* of Gospel citizenship. These are more important than rights. There is the duty to perfect our personality; to serve our generation in the spirit of Christ; to know and do God's will. Consider the mutual loyalties of Gospel citizenship. No man lives to himself. We must sympathize with each other; help each other; sacrifice for each other.

Athletes of the Gospel.—Loyalty to Christ is not negative or puny; it is martial and athletic business. It calls for red blood, for daring, for training, for resolution, and for persistence. Consider the athlete's *purpose*: he means to win. He means to win honourably. He loses in fine spirit as a good sportsman. Consider the athlete's discipline. No denial is too great to put him in fit condition. He plays the game with the team, merging individual desire in the victory for the group. Consider the athlete's determination. He does not give up even when he is apparently beaten. These characteristics are called for by the Gospel.

SERMON TWENTY-SEVEN

We draw near the conclusion of this series of sermons in which we have attempted to set forth the good news of the reconciliation in Christ before the community. The message is concluded with the statement of Christ's doctrine and program of the Kingdom of Heaven.

Two books of fairly recent date are recommended: *What is the Kingdom of Heaven?* by A. Clutton Brock. 1920. Scribner's. *The Christian Adventure*, by A. Herbert Gray. 1920. Association Press. Each of these books handles the great subject with a fresh and suggestive style. They will stimulate a preacher's thinking most profitably.

It must be admitted that the idea of the Kingdom of God has been sadly neglected in the teaching of the Church and the work of preaching. The following statement is most important, coming from an investigation of the religious ideas and life of the soldiers in the Great War:

"Should we not include education in the idea of the Kingdom of God? I found when it came to this that I had to begin at the beginning and lead men gradually to the idea. Not one in a hundred had apparently ever heard of it. I mean among the churchgoers. Religion was to them a personal and individual matter. Of course there must be the foundation, but it ought not to stop there, and

as far as I can see ministers in general have been letting it stop there, or have been so vague about the Kingdom that men haven't caught the idea at all." ¹

Dr. Gray confirms this opinion in the following paragraph:

"It may be doubted whether two per cent. of the people who attend churches have any clear conception of the meaning of this phrase which was so constantly on the lips of Jesus. It might have been expected that it would have been the very first thing to be explained to children in connection with Christianity, and that church members would receive abundant instruction about it. It would have been natural if it had filled a central place in catechisms, and in confessions of faith. But as a matter of fact, it hardly has any place at all in creeds, or catechisms. A man might read a great deal of ordinary Christian literature and never come across the expression." ²

Every preacher will wish to frame his own definition of the Kingdom of God. There are many discussions of the idea to be found. We give here simply the one proposed by Dr. Gray:

"What, then, did Jesus mean by the Kingdom of God? I think a partial answer at least is to say

¹ *Religion Among American Men*, 1920, Association Press, p. 15.

² *Ibid.*, p. 20.

that He used that phrase as a description of what human life becomes when it is lived under the constraint of two truths—the Fatherhood of God, and the Brotherhood of man. Those were the two great truths He came to reveal both by life and by death, and when any man fully receives them and lives under their dominion he enters the Kingdom. When any group of people live in that way the Kingdom appears as a social fact in this life.

“Another way in which Jesus put the same truth was to say that there are only two great commandments—to love God and to love one’s neighbour. And when any man begins to obey those commandments he enters the Kingdom. The Kingdom means human life dominated through and through by love. To a certain extent the Kingdom comes into being when even one man achieves this kind of life. It began to come when Jesus Himself came, and individuals can realize many of its blessings in their own lives even though they are isolated individuals. And yet the Kingdom cannot fully come for any individual until others also have entered it. It means a society of a certain kind. Indeed, it cannot fully come until all men have entered it, and life the wide world over is life dominated by its principles.”¹

It will be immediately apparent that this idea of the Kingdom of God is consistent with the message that we have been giving in these sermons thus far.

¹ *Religion Among American Men*, pp. 21, 22.

It gathers about Christ; it involves loyalty to Him; it is a matter of choice and decision; it is a practical endeavour for the individual and it includes the whole of his life. On the basis of these truths we proceed to unfold the first text of the five devoted to this primary Christian doctrine.

The Gospel of the Kingdom

And Jesus went about in all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom (Matt. 4:23).

The message of Jesus was expressed in the analogy of a kingdom. It was the only analogy that could have been understood. It was a heavenly order of earthly life; it represented the reign of God in the whole life of man.

The reality of the Kingdom.—This is more than a clear and forceful figure of rhetoric. The Kingdom has reality. We cannot see its regal head, its court, its palaces, its splendour; but there are actual facts in the spiritual Kingdom that correspond to these temporal things. There is vast energy in the Kingdom; its laws are valid; its rights and duties claim our power and loyalty as much as those of the civil state. Jesus established a real order of life.

Our neglect of the Kingdom.—Strangely, this truth was central in all the teaching and action of Jesus; but it has been given scant place in the thought and life of the Christian Church. Other doctrines and duties have usurped its primary place and claim. Jesus exalted the reality of the Kingdom of Heaven as an order of life meant for the

world; we have thought of it chiefly as describing the life after death or a far-off consummation of development.

The reaffirming of the Kingdom.—This is the day in which to affirm and realize the doctrine of the Kingdom of God. The Great War has revealed depths of sin and hate never before expressed by men; it has uncovered yearnings for unity and loving service never defined before. The conception of the Kingdom of Heaven that Jesus made plain in His words and life shows us the only workable program that can meet these aspirations of the human spirit in the modern age. Therefore the pulpit must publish the good news of the Kingdom and it must be made the program for the world.

SERMON TWENTY-EIGHT

We now pass to a study of the conditions on which we may enter the Kingdom of God. It is not difficult. The terms are easy to understand and we can fulfill them if we will without any heavy external conditions being imposed upon us. We have given in the suggestions connected with sermon twenty-seven a statement by Dr. Gray concerning the way in which the conditions of entrance may be met.

If the condition of entrance into the Kingdom is self-surrender or meekness or humility, we must consider this fact in reference to another promise of Jesus, where He said, "I came that they may

have life, and may have it abundantly." The doctrines of self-sacrifice and self-realization are the two opposite sides of the one truth that the way of entrance into the Kingdom of God was the attainment of life through the yielding of life.

It has been put by Dr. Gray as follows:

"What, then, of this call to self-denial? Well, it was a call to self-surrender, but not a call to world renunciation. Men and women were to go on living in the world, and were to continue to exercise their gifts and talents there, only all now with a new motive. They were to be busy not for self but for all men. The statesman was to be busy, not that he might rise to some supreme place of power, but that national affairs might be well administered. The fisherman was to catch fish, not that he might make a corner in the fish market and so become rich, but that the people might have fresh and wholesome food. . . . The trader was to go on with his business and put all his brains into it, not that he might make a pile and retire early into idleness, but that he might help the free exchange of the world's goods, and bring ease to lives that were straitened. . . . In fact the self-regarding element was to pass out of every life, and so each life was to be set free to become something finer and larger and happier. It does in literal fact turn out to be true, that he who loseth his life shall find it, and none but those who have so lost life can ever imagine what a great and satis-

fying and romantic thing life may be through all its course.”¹

So let us present the truth in its whole measure. The self-sacrifice is necessary; and the self-realization follows. The self must be more fully realized before it may be sacrificed. Both truths are vital and they support one another.

Entering the Kingdom

Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father who is in heaven.

Except ye turn, and become as little children, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven (Matt. 7:21; 18:3).

We come voluntarily into the Kingdom of Heaven rather than becoming its members by the accident of birth or environment.

Humility and trust.—These are represented by the attitude and action of the child, who came to Jesus happily and confidently when he was asked to do so. Jesus does not make *childishness* the condition of entering the Kingdom, but the childlike spirit of humility and trustfulness. The Kingdom is the realm of service; therefore humble hearts alone can share it. The Kingdom is the realm of loving deeds; therefore mutual confidence alone can meet its obligations. The child did not stop to argue or protest when Jesus placed him among the disciples; he put himself into the care of Jesus immediately and happily. Thus we enter the Kingdom.

¹*The Christian Adventure*, p. 32.

Obedience to God's will.—The laws of the Kingdom of Heaven are determined by the will of God, which is dictated by personal love. When love decides the program of life it must be good. To yield our lives to the program which infinite love and wisdom have determined is to be sure of all the best satisfactions which can possibly come to us. Obedience is an unwelcome proposal to all proud and self-conscious men. They do not like to submit their wills to a higher will or to subject their lives to a program that they did not shape. Like the lowly entrance to a lofty room; however, obedience is the way by which we enter upon the Christian life. The act of surrender is one of yielding; but the gain is eternal in its rewards and satisfactions.

SERMON TWENTY-NINE

Every kingdom must be founded on established laws and programs of orderly procedure. The Kingdom of Heaven is no exception to this. Jesus laid the foundation of the new order of life in certain profound principles. Three of these we are to treat in the sermon of the day.

The first point to be borne in mind is the exceeding simplicity of the three laws. They are so well known, so plain, so practical that we do not regard them as seriously as we might if they were not a part of the very fundamental morality and religious training which is in our best homes. These three laws are much like an axiom in mathematics;

they do not admit of discussion. They are accepted without dissent. The reason approves at least the first two with no debate.

Now this makes it all the more difficult to handle these great laws. Of course, the instinctive reply is, we believe in the law of love and the Golden Rule and the great rules of life contained in the Sermon on the Mount. And it is the task of the preacher in this sermon to make these old and accepted laws glow with new meaning and drive home to the practical life of the congregation with new power. This sermon seems to be easy to prepare; as a matter of fact, it is difficult to inform these old and familiar laws with new content. We must gather illustrations and make application that will bring the laws out of the abstract and make them live in the daily lives of men.

Some years ago Samuel M. Jones of Toledo gained the name of "Golden Rule" Jones because of the way in which he tried to run his business and the affairs of the city of which he was Mayor. He wrote a great many letters to all sorts of people connected with his corporation, and many of these are gathered in a volume rare now but worth many times the price of some of the "best sellers." Here is one of his illustrations of one of the laws of the kingdom:

"A recent instance of heroism in every-day life indicates the growing power of the Golden Rule. A couple of months ago two negroes in Indianapo-

lis were inside a steam-boiler cleaning it, when some one who was not aware that the men were inside, opened a cock and turned scalding hot steam from another boiler in on the men. The only way of escape was up a ladder through a manhole. Instantly both men jumped for the ladder; the man reaching it first had ascended two or three steps; a thought struck him and he stepped down; he turned to his companion and said: 'You go first, Jim, you are married.' Jim was saved to his family and the other black-skinned hero was cooked to his death by the boiling steam."

There are scores of similar stories that illustrate the power of the great laws of the Kingdom. They do actually work. Men are saved from sin and selfishness by the power of the ruling principles of the Kingdom. We must be careful not to use what is commonly called the "sob stuff" in our sermons; but a piece of honest narrative like the foregoing drives the truth home and makes the laws of the Kingdom glorious.

Laws of the Kingdom

Every kingdom is an "order" of life, a practical way of living. Therefore it must have its laws, in obedience to which freedom is found. The harmonious relationships of life are imperative to welfare and progress.

The law of love.—See Matt. 22: 35-40. Summed up briefly, this says: Love God with all your being. There must be nothing partial in the loyal affection

that we render our God. He must be given an intelligent love. We are not to love blindly or with bigoted tenacity. Christ wins the approval of our minds as well as of our hearts. Our wills must go into it as well as our emotions; the whole personality must answer God's claim. Then we must love our neighbour as we love ourselves; we must love our neighbour in order to increase our love for our own best selves; we must love and perfect our best selves in order to love and serve our neighbour.

The Golden Rule.—See Matt. 7: 12. Summed up briefly this means that we must perform for others all those acts which, done to us by others, would promote our highest welfare. We want just treatment; then we must treat others justly. We want to be forgiven; then we must forgive others. We want to be dealt with patiently; then we must deal patiently with others. Setting the standard by which others are to determine their conduct toward us, we set the standard by which our conduct toward others is to be determined.

The Sermon on the Mount.—See Matt. 5-7. Summed up briefly this offers a simple program for daily conduct which would issue in such a just, kind world as humanity never yet has known. Here the great motives of life that lead to noble action are set forth simply. It begins with the promise of earthly happiness and closes with the promise of eternal satisfaction. It is the greatest program of human joy and well-being that ever has been offered to mankind. Jesus proved by His own life that its principles could be successfully carried out.

It is worth our highest endeavours to attain it; it is God's way for us to follow.

SERMON THIRTY

We now come to study the rewards and permanent satisfactions of the Christian life as they are realized in the relationships of the Kingdom of God. Too little has been said about the durable gifts of this relationship as they appear in daily life. Three of them are to be considered; but these are only examples of the gifts which come to men in the service of Christ.

The one that we emphasize at the conclusion of the sermon ought to be stressed more often in our preaching. The world sorely needs the gift of joy and men are seeking it in all kinds of ways. There is only one true source of happiness. It is found in the service of Christ. Every other ground of satisfaction fails; this never ceases to be the firm foundation. No disappointment or disaster can possibly overwhelm us when we are in personal union with the living Christ. Men have proved this with apparently every obstacle against them and have sung their hymn of victory in the face of those experiences which have struck others dumb.

The great expression of this truth is in the life of Jesus Himself. We have represented Him so long as the Man of Sorrows that we have missed the fact of His perfectly glorious happiness. He met the hardest experiences that can come to a

human being; but in the very crisis of His life He talked about His joy.

Not only was He happy Himself but He shared the happiness of others. He understood the forgotten aspect of sympathy, "rejoice with them that rejoice." Jesus entered into the happiness of a wedding feast and He shared the joy of the banquet.

His happiness was grounded in His consciousness of the Kingdom of Heaven.

✓ "As Chesterton has said, we cannot in the end rejoice in anything less than the whole scheme of things. The profoundest truths which theology has ever tried to handle are involved in the issue as to whether life can be happy. In the last resort it depends upon God, and upon the kind of God He is, whether we can rejoice. But Jesus was quite sure of God—quite sure that the best we can think or imagine about Him is not so good as the reality. He exhausted Himself in finding words and similes to suggest the greatness and splendour of God, and seems to have felt that He had never managed to convey the truth. Of course He was a happy man. And He holds the supreme secret for all who want to be happy."¹

The Privileges of the Kingdom

For the Kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit (Rom. 14: 17).

¹ Gray, *The Christian Adventure*, p. 18.

Membership in the Kingdom of Heaven brings many duties; but also great privileges and rights that are highly desirable.

Righteousness.—The result of allegiance to Christ and loyalty to the Kingdom is a changed life. Goodness, honour, integrity, take the place of the old, mean, and selfish motives which formally controlled our actions. A good life is not gained by the mechanical addition of virtues one by one; it issues from the habitual practice of the ruling principles of Jesus which we accept in faith and obedience. A good life is therefore the effect of union with Christ in the master-motives of life.

Peace.—The only way in which the world ever will unite in the covenants and institutions that will end war and conflict of all kinds will be to make the laws of the Kingdom of Heaven the laws of individual and social life. There is no permanent "balance of power" that can insure the world's peace. Love and self-sacrifice and justice, recognized and obeyed as the fundamental laws of life, will bring the day of peace.

Joy.—The race demands happiness with eager hearts. We have the right to be happy. But our joy often rests in shallow and passing experiences. The joys of the Kingdom are deep and permanent. Our profoundest happiness is secured when we are investing our lives in the general program in which Jesus found His joy and satisfaction. We know His happiness, which nothing could prevent; it rested in His loving service to others, which nothing could discourage or stop. We are to do as Jesus did in order to be happy as Jesus was happy.

SERMON THIRTY-ONE

Now we close the series of sermons on the Kingdom of God as expressing the message of Jesus and summing up the Gospel of the reconciliation of men to God through union with Christ.

What is the essential fact in the peace and permanence of a kingdom? It is loyalty. Without this the administration of the kingdom is impossible. When loyalty breaks down the kingdom perishes.

— The book which sets this truth forth in its religious bearing is *The Philosophy of Loyalty* by Josiah Royce. The essential meaning of this great human trait is interpreted by Prof. Royce and it is clearly explained that this truth applied to the religious life gives seriousness and effectiveness to the great experience.

When we pass into the distinctly Christian life we recognize how valid this great principle is. Christianity consists essentially in loyalty to a Person. Perhaps there is no better way in which to prepare for this sermon than to review the situation in which we all live and see how central loyalty is to the joy and permanence of the highest human relationships. The whole business world is founded upon it. Loyalty to one's work and employer is fundamental to industry and will be whatever changes may come into the relations between labour and capital. Every friendship is

founded in loyalty. Unless we can rely upon one another in all kinds of weather we cannot be real friends. Every home is based on simply trustworthiness on the part of each member of the group. The neighbourhood depends for its welfare upon the loyalty to the common interests of the families that compose it. That which will promote the commonwealth lays its imperial claim upon the interest and the loyal devotion of the members of the community. The Church is also founded upon the same principle. Allegiance to creeds that are to be defended must be crowned by personal loyalties of the finest type if the Church is really to become the corporation of Christ. The political order depends upon loyalty. Every civic institution calls for the exercise of this high virtue. The betrayal of public trust is only a sign of the breakdown of loyalty. And thus the background is prepared for the truth that the Christian religion consists in loyalty to a Person. As we have maintained from the beginning, it is through personal relations with a divine and living Saviour that we complete the Christian experience. The supreme test is loyalty to the Master Christ.

Loyalty to the King

Ye call me Teacher, and Lord; and ye say well; for so I am (John 13:13).

Jesus did not hesitate to affirm His place of supreme authority in the Kingdom of God. He placed

His own Person at the center as the object of loyalty on the part of all Christians. The test still is that of loyalty to Christ.

Loyalty to the King's truth.—Jesus brought the truth by which men may live well and presented it plainly so that all may understand it. But understanding is not enough. We must take the truth that Jesus taught and exemplified and make it into workable principles to guide us in daily living. It has a sacred claim upon us; it is not a merely abstract truth. Test life by what we are doing with the King's truth.

Loyalty to the King's spirit.—More important and imperial than all that Jesus taught was the spirit in which He lived and served His age. There is perfect union between His words and His spirit; but it is the spirit that is supreme. This spirit also comes to us with a personal claim. It demands that we shall bring our own lives under the sway of the same high mood and sacrificial temper. When we do this we are sure that our life will be useful and happy. We may miss the attainments that the world calls fortunate; but we shall have the inner peace and joy that the world cannot give or take away. Test life by what we are doing with the King's spirit.

Loyalty to the King's Person.—Either Jesus was the rightful Commander of men's lives or He was the most audacious of proud leaders; for He dared to make loyalty to His Person the test of life in the Kingdom of God. He said, Follow *me*. He put Himself at the center of the love and the service that

men should seek to render to God and to one another. It is still so. Christians are those who have yielded their wills to Christ and are utterly loyal to Him as well as to His truth and spirit. They think of themselves as still the followers and disciples of a Person. Jesus does not walk at their sides but He reigns in their hearts. He is not with them at the table or in the street; but He is actually with them in their inmost purposes and endeavours. When they are sure of this and loyal to all that the truth involves they are strong and happy. Test life by loyalty to Christ Himself.

SERMON THIRTY-TWO

In this last sermon of the series in which the Gospel is presented to the community we undertake to show the practical meaning of the truth concerning eternal life. One of the most serious charges made against Christians is to claim that, whatever they may believe about the immortality of the soul, they behave as if they were simply mortal. The great truth may be in their theories; but it is not active in their lives. Now if this is so, it is a most serious fault. We need not discuss the validity of the charge; we must present the fact of immortality with such clearness and conviction that men will be ready to make practical use of the truth and regulate their conduct according to it.

The matter has been put vividly as follows:

“The truth is, we must live, and we must live by some kind of belief or disbelief. Now either the soul persists after death or it does not. These are the alternatives, there is no other. You may ignore the whole question, and even pour contempt on those who expend thought upon it, but you do not thereby get rid of either horn of the dilemma, the great Either-Or on which hang interests unspeakably momentous. Immortality is either a fact or it is a falsehood. Do you say: Granted, but I am in no position to prove it to be either one or other, therefore I can make no affirmation either by way of belief or disbelief. Very well, but *you are living as if one or the other were true*. Logically you may be entitled to the name ‘agnostic,’ but in actual practice you are a believer¹ or a disbeliever.”¹

This is the point that we are seeking to bring out in this sermon. Dr. McComb speaks of our action as “the ethics of an eternal being.” The ordinary standards and the great life objectives of the Christian must be those of “an eternal being.” We are not here as citizens of time only. The work that we do is not carried on as if it were to cease or to come to its full fruition within the scope of an average human life. There are far deeper values in it. We must not act according to mortal but rather according to immortal

¹ *The Future Life in the Light of Modern Inquiry*, by Samuel McComb, 1920, p. 25.

standards. This is a truth that we can apply in the busiest day and from which we can derive inspiration and hope in the darkest hour.

Sons of the Resurrection

Sons of God, being sons of the resurrection (Luke 20: 36).

Christians have been well called the Children of the Resurrection. The Christian life is accurately described as the practice of the life eternal. The peril attending our belief in immortality is that it will be immortal in our theories but dead in our lives. The urgent obligation upon all Christians is to live day by day as if each were a part of the eternal life, imparting immortal meaning to mortal life. Four principles are valid:

All acts have eternal value.—No deed is something simply done and ended. It goes on forever in its influence. It must reach its conclusion sometime and bear its inevitable fruit. We cannot say good-bye to our deeds; we shall meet them again! Therefore the fact of immortality adds the greatest possible meaning and worth to all our deeds and duties.

All souls have eternal worth.—If the soul is endowed with immortal value how can we injure it whether it be our own or that of a comrade. It is more durable and precious than anything else we know. True respect for ourselves and for others is derived from this fact of the deathless value of the human spirit. Kindness and social obligation find their highest warrant in this truth. God's image

in man and the fact of immortality make our earthly life significant and beautiful.

God's highest purposes for man's welfare involve eternity.—We know how short the span of human life on earth is. But the resources of eternity are in God's hands. We may see only the broken arc here; but there is still possible the "perfect round" in the eternal world. We might easily despair if the span of mortal life and the small resources of earth were available for the perfection of God's purposes. But when we reckon with eternity we take courage and join more eagerly in partnership with God to realize our supreme good.

New power for daily life issues from this truth.—The treasures of hope and fresh resolution open from this truth. Immortality does not remain a doctrine about which to speculate but a truth by which to live. It brings confidence and joy into even the hardest situations, for heaven and earth are one and eternity will see time's task completed.

PART III

Talks to Children and Young
People

TALKS TO CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

A PART of the work of the preacher or evangelist in a church mission or campaign will be concerned with the children and young people, to whom he will seek to bring the Gospel as a message of life, suited to their needs and designed to bring them into such a natural and deliberate union with Christ as will make them happy and victorious Christians.

It will be necessary at the outset to present the Christian message to them in such ways as will show them that the Christian religion has something to do with their lives in home and school and as they begin their business careers. That there is need of this admits of no doubt. After a talk to a group of High School pupils an earnest girl said: "I never supposed before that religion had anything to do with my home or school work." When she was questioned she added that she had thought of religion as something that involved going to church and saying prayers and not doing certain things which the church people were supposed to object to. But she never had thought that religion had any power to determine the quality of the work one did at school, the kind of a game one

played and the sort of a friend one proved to be in the week-day relationships of an office. When she saw that this was just the world in which the fact of her loyalty to Christ was to be tested and proved she had a new conception of religion.

It is this old problem of remoteness that we have to reckon with. The message of Christ had been connected up in her mind with certain duties carried out on Sundays, with distant rewards and punishments in a far-away heaven, with certain denials and restraints. She never had seen that to be a Christian meant to gain power to become what she ought to be as a child of God.

Therefore if it is possible in the church mission to gather the children and young people for meetings by themselves, let the subjects be such as suit their particular problems and surroundings. The same message that is brought to the adults may be brought to them; but it must be in different terms and with a different approach.

The following suggestions are therefore offered for the meetings of the children and young people, in the hope that, as in the case of the sermons, they may be freely adapted to the occasions and fitted to the temper and the problems of childhood and youth.

The nine talks that follow are grouped around the idea of *Loyalty*, which is one that all children and young people understand thoroughly. It is fundamental to their action. It figures in their

groups and gangs. The whole matter of "snitching" or "tattling" gathers around a conception of loyalty for which they will often suffer intensely.

The subjects chosen are those that have to do with the daily living of those to whom the talks are addressed. This seems better than to take anything at all remote from life. One need not fear to be specific and to hew to the line in talking with children and youth about the fundamental problems of life. They are willing to listen to plain speaking. Therefore make the applications of the truth clear and do not flinch. They will respect complete honesty of statement. They like to have the truth put with perfect impartiality, and above all things they do not like to be patronized or talked down to. Respect their intelligence, their honesty and their willingness to respond to the claims of a truth even if it involves some sacrifices.

TALK ONE

LOYAL TO CHRIST

"Follow me" (Matt. 9:9).

We all follow leaders and are loyal to those who command our respect and friendship. We ought to be loyal to the noblest and best leader. Jesus is the best Leader whom we possibly could follow. These are some of the reasons:

Because of the happy, useful life that He lived.
We catch glimpses of Him from the time He was a child until He died when He was a little more than

thirty years old, and always He is helping others, living in a brave and happy way, and being the kind of a person that we would like to be. It is worth while to be loyal to such a Leader.

Because of the noble rules for life that He gave. There is no other great teacher whose rules for living are so lofty and so simple and so possible to carry out. Take the so-called Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5-7 as an example. If we would practice these principles steadily the whole world would be changed. It would prevent the sins and the wars that make life miserable for mankind. It would take away the strife from our homes, the conflict from our labour world, and give us peace and good will everywhere.

Because of the character which His friendship creates. No one would claim that the followers of Christ have been perfect men and women. Many have come into the church claiming to be loyal to Him who have not been worthy of the relationship. But on the whole, during all the course of Christian history, there has been a type of people who have been the loyal followers of Christ; and these have been the best, the bravest and the happiest people that the world ever has seen. The leaders in all the movements for the uplift of mankind have been the followers of Jesus. The men and women who have made the greatest sacrifices for others have been Christians. The finest ideal characters have been created through loyalty to Christ.

This is the warrant for accepting Jesus as Master and giving Him the first place in our lives.

TALK TWO

LOYAL TO CHRIST AT HOME

"And he went down with them, and came to Nazareth; and he was subject unto them; and his mother kept all these sayings in her heart" (Luke 2:51).

One of the places where we are to show our loyalty to Jesus is in our home life. Every glimpse that we have of Jesus shows Him to have been true to all the relations of His home in Nazareth. Are we also happy and comfortable to live with? Make the following tests:

Getting the unselfish family spirit. Jesus had this: He was "subject unto" his father and mother. He obeyed. He fitted His life into the life of the home. He gave up His individual rights and pleasures for the higher duties and privileges of the home. We cannot have our own way all the time if we are to live with others. The unselfish spirit of Jesus is the only one that ever will produce a happy home.

Doing our part of the family work. This tests the unselfish spirit. No home can be happy and prosperous unless the labour is divided and each one according to his ability does his fair share. The family does not exist simply to serve its members; the members are to serve one another in the family. The same faithfulness and happy temper that we put into some great work we must also put into the little duties that are our part of the home life.

Being patient in home life. We know each other so well in our homes that it is difficult to get along

with one another and be sympathetic and patient. It is so much easier to be polite at a party or when others are looking on than it is to keep from quick answers and provoking acts with our own brothers and sisters. But courtesy to our own home folk is essential in being loyal to Christ. He was considerate of His mother and always a gentleman, even with those who knew Him best.

Bringing out the best in others. So many times members of the same family irritate and nag one another! So they bring out the worst in one another instead of the best. But people were always aroused to be and do their best when they were with Jesus. We must see the best in each other and try to bring it out. This tests our loyalty to Christ.

TALK THREE

LOYAL TO CHRIST IN SCHOOL LIFE

"Give diligence to present thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, handling aright the word of truth" (2 Tim. 2: 15).

The way in which we prepare our lessons, meet our friends, prove our loyalty to the highest ideals of our school, is a true test of our sincerity in following Christ.

Christ and our lessons. Has our loyalty to Christ anything to do with the way in which we prepare our school work? Yes. If we are honestly loyal to Christ we shall do our hardest home work with all our might, and work as faithfully when we are

not being watched as we would when we sit in study period with the teacher present. If we are *sure* that Christ is our Master we will not need to be watched or prodded to work hard. He was a worker who did not need to be ashamed. We shall be if we follow Him.

Christ and examinations. The tendency to cheat is one of the hardest temptations that we meet in our school life. We have no more right to steal each other's thoughts and knowledge than we have to rob the gymnasium lockers. To gain information by whispering and looking over the papers of others, to use "cribs" in an examination, to be dishonest in any test is to fail Christ. Nothing less than complete honesty in school work will meet the conditions of being loyal to Christ.

Christ and the spirit of the school. Every school has what we call its "spirit." It is the sum of its ideals, its enthusiasms and its noblest loyalties. Every member of the school makes or hurts the school spirit. Our individual honour, courtesy, faithfulness contributes to the spirit of the school as a whole. The greatest gift we could make to our school is to put the spirit of Christ into all our acts. It would raise the whole temper of the group. Christ is the supreme example of what loyalty to others in a group will do. He changed the whole life of each disciple by what He did for him as a Friend. The spirit of the Twelve Disciples was the finest that we can discover. Jesus wants us to do for the spirit of our school what He did for His friends.

TALK FOUR

LOYAL TO CHRIST IN OUR FRIENDSHIPS

"I have called you friends" (John 15:15).

There is a place for our religion in the working out of our friendships. The help that we give to one another is of the greatest importance in the making of our character. To be the kind of a friend that Jesus was is to measure up to the highest standards of help and happiness.

Appreciating the best in others. We are always happy when our friends find out the best that is in us and appreciate and approve it. It encourages us to try to be what those who love us think we are able to become. If we do to others as we would like to have others do to us we will also find and appreciate the best that is in our friends. If there are faults in them we will give our friends the benefit of the doubt.

Being kind and patient with our friends. How patient Jesus was with such disciples as Peter, who did not understand Him, and, in the hardest hour of His life, denied Him! It looked as if there were nothing left of Peter but a miserable traitor and failure. But Jesus stood by him and in time he became one of the great apostles and gave his life at last for the Master whom he had denied. If we are loyal to Christ we are ready to be patient and kind with our comrades and daily work and school. They make mistakes; but so do we. They need another chance; so do we. They generally will make good; so shall we.

Taking a real part in the personal problems of our friends. The way in which Jesus added His personal influence to the struggle of His friends to attain their ideals points out the way in which we may be of the greatest help to others. It is more important that we should give our friends the force of a right example, the strength of real encouragement, the lift of a high ideal than that we should take them to parties, give them rides in our automobiles or do any other pleasant thing that will simply make them happy and comfortable.

TALK FIVE

LOYAL TO CHRIST IN PLAY

"And if also a man contend in the games, he is not crowned, except he have contended lawfully" (2 Tim. 2:5).

Is sport religious? Is it not "worldly"? Does being loyal to Christ have anything to do with the way we play?

The secret of true sport is the game, not the victory. Start with this fact. It is not supremely important whether or not we win; it is all important whether or not we play fair. A victory won by foul means is a real defeat. Many a man carries a foul conscience because he knows that he won by an undetected trick. We cannot be loyal to Christ and use any dishonourable method even to gain a most desirable end. Christian players have white consciences and clean hands.

Fair play is a Christian art. It starts with self-

control. One must gain mastery of himself before he can control a group play. Jesus was always in command of Himself. He never let go in fits of passion. He never let His vanity get the upper hand so that He preferred an individual play to a team play. The success of the whole was put ahead of His own reputation or advantage. Then fair play goes on to a clear sense of comradeship and loyalty to the group. Fair play is always social. It brings the action and the interests of others into consideration. Jesus was a perfect example of this sense. He thought of the interests of every member of His group of friends and He sought first the welfare of the whole company. Thus fair play sometimes involves the sacrifice of the individual to the success of the game as a whole. It is what is known as the principle of the "sacrifice hit," where an individual player, for the sake of the runners on bases, places his hit and is put out in order to give running time to his comrades. The team is always more than the "star" player. Sometimes the "star" is a nuisance to the team. To blend our own interests with those of the group and then to yield them willingly to the success of the whole is one of the best tests we can make of our loyalty to Christ.

TALK SIX

LOYAL TO CHRIST IN DAILY WORK

"Is not this the carpenter?" (Mark 6:3).

The way in which we do our daily work constantly tests our loyalty to Christ.

There is a Christian standard for labour. It grows out of the Golden Rule. If any one were working for us we would feel that he should give an honest return for the wages he was paid. Any one who does less than his best, therefore, in working for others is not doing to others as he would have others do to him. Also, out of loyalty to the work itself, we ought to do our utmost and best. All work is done, not for wages alone, but for the work itself. If it is worth doing it is worth doing in the best possible way that we can do it.

There is a Christian spirit in labour. This demands more than just the amount of work that we do; it has to do with the temper or mood in which we work. One may do all that is required, but accomplish it in such a temper of grudging complaint that the beauty of it is quite spoiled. To whine through a job may ruin it, even although we succeed in getting it fully done on time. Christian work is *happy* work. That is the way in which Jesus threw Himself into labour.

There is a Christian reward of labour. It ought to be first a fair return in wages, based not merely on the price in labour in the market, but upon a just division of the product of the work done. But the greater reward comes from seeing a piece of necessary work done and done well. One of the highest joys we know is to look at something that we have done and feel the satisfaction of knowing that we have put our very best self into it and that it is a credit to us. If this is an office job, or a task on the farm, or something done around the house for the

good of the family, or a hard lesson in school, the principle holds in each case. This reward cannot be estimated in dollars and cents. It is the inner satisfaction that comes from knowing that our hands have shared in the doing of something that makes it easier and better for others to live. This is to be loyal to Christ.

TALK SEVEN

LOYAL TO CHRIST IN OUR PERSONAL EXAMPLE

"Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an ensample to them that believe, in word, in manner of life, in love, in faith, in purity" (1 Tim. 4:12).

The power of personal example is almost boundless; we begin our life as imitators of others and we never cease to be swayed by personal example. Our highest duty in setting an example to others is to represent Christ to them. Five aspects of personal example are indicated in the text:

In our words. Note the power of speech. What we say not only reveals the quality of our lives; but it exerts deep and strong influence upon others. To speak the right word in the right way at the right time is a Christian art. We must guard our words carefully.

"Boys flying kites pull in their white winged birds;
You can't do that when you are flying words."

In daily action. What we do speaks louder than what we say. There is no such thing as a trivial deed. It may escape us with little thought of its

power; but it may exert the deepest influence upon another. We know that some of the greatest men have had their lives swayed by the smallest acts of others.

In love. We cannot all be famous or rich; but we can all love and be kind. The strongest forces in all the world are those that spring from a loving purpose. Love is not easy. It takes all the strength and decision of the strongest character to love good causes and all one's comrades truly. But it is the only life that is worth while. In the end our worth and influence are both measured by our love.

In faith. The way we believe in God, in goodness and in one another exerts a mighty influence. Sometimes the highest duty that comes to us in school or in business is to stand true to a noble and unselfish principle, having faith in it when others refuse to believe. We must prove that we believe in goodness and truth and will stand by them whatever the cost. Such an example counts.

In purity. This means a clean heart first of all, one that cherishes no hatreds and harbours no coarse thoughts. It means pure talk and courteous action with our friends. It scorns stories that have an unclean meaning and suggestions that easily may be turned into impure suggestions. It stands for the noblest treatment of boys and girls by one another.

TALK EIGHT

LOYAL TO CHRIST IN PERSONAL HABITS

"I do always the things that are pleasing to him"
(John 8: 29).

It is said that we all are bundles of habits. That which we do regularly, habitually, without thinking about it, is the real index of our character. The finest example of personal habits is Jesus. We ought to work hard to grow like Him in our habitual action. Study these four habits:

The habit of hard work. Industry and diligence lay the foundations of success and are the sign of our religion. Only a few men and women succeed by what seems to be genius or especial talent. Even genius is nine-tenths hard work. Laziness is immoral. It is one way to deny God when we loaf and shirk. Christ was a worker. We must follow Him.

The habit of kindness. Hard work alone may produce a hard character. Kindness is the force that binds the family group together and makes the whole home cheerful. It comes into business life with the richest blessings. It seems only a slight thing to be kind; but it is one of the noblest of habits. It means that we put ourselves into the place of another and try to use generous judgments. It brings help and courage to others quite beyond the apparent power of the kind act or generous word.

The habit of helping. We all need help. We are neither wise enough nor strong enough to live wholly by ourselves. So we must gain the habit of lifting loads for others as we need help ourselves. A divided task brings greater joy to both who share the burden. We all like to be independent and we must not thrust ourselves upon others; but we need help and we must learn to give help in the natural and beautiful way in which Jesus did. No person

ever met Jesus without gaining new strength in some way for the work that he was doing.

The habit of faith. What a large place is occupied in life by faith or trust! We must trust nature, of which we are a part. We must trust our comrades, with whom we have to work out the problems of our common life. We must trust ideals and hopes, which inspire us to high and noble living. Most of all, we must trust God, the great object of faith, and Christ, the great Master. We can learn to do this so steadily that it grows into a habit. So we shall live well because we trust great principles and are loyal to Christ.

TALK NINE

LOYAL TO CHRIST IN PERSONAL AMBITION

"My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to accomplish his work" (John 4:34).

Our personal ambition is, like the chart and compass to the navigator or the base line to the surveyor, essential to our success or failure in life. The highest ambition that we possibly could have is that which controlled Jesus. There are different aspects of it.

The ambition to live the best life possible. Jesus had this ambition. He was eager to "sanctify" or "perfect" Himself for the good of others. This means simply that He yearned to live the best possible life. See John 17:19. He took care of His body, trained His mind, made His will power strong, entered into the largest number of available relations with others, all in order that He might live a

complete life. This outlines our ambition for the best life possible.

The ambition to make the world better. Jesus had this ambition. He was ready to help the sick and the poor; He gave every kind of aid to those who were missing the meaning of life as a result of their sin. He tried to make it a more joyful and satisfactory experience to live. When He had ended His life it could be truly said that He had made this world a better place to live in as long as it should last because He had given His best to it. There is a real approval of this kind of an ambition in all honest hearts; the way in which to realize it is to be loyal to Christ in our daily thought and action.

The ambition to please God. Our ambition to use our lives for the highest purpose and to help others is summed up in our desire to know and do God's will in such a way that we may please Him. It is like a child's relation to his own home. Parents have high ideals for their children. When those ideals are taken up and carried out by their children, parents are pleased. That is, the purpose of the parents for their children becomes the highest ambition of the children themselves. To follow Christ in our personal ambitions, therefore, means to do what He did: learn in every possible way the will of God and then make it the law of our lives. We know what God's will for us is, namely, that we should be the kind of a person that Jesus was, true and brave and trustful, making the utmost of ourselves and giving ourselves at our utmost to the world in which we live.

PART IV
Special Gatherings

MEN'S MEETINGS, WOMEN'S MEETINGS, BIBLE TALKS

AS a part of the church mission, the evangelistic campaign or even the year's preaching organized around the evangelistic message, there will probably be meetings for men alone, for women alone, or at least for such adult meetings as will call for addresses of a different type from that required in the sermons that we have proposed.

In view of this need we make suggestions of texts, subjects and expositions of Scripture (which we have called Bible Talks for lack of a better name) suited to these group meetings. The hearers will generally be men and women who have been Christians for some years and whose experience may be trusted to afford the necessary background for edifying and interpreting addresses on the great characters, doctrines, promises, and assurances of the Bible. Mr. Moody used to give these as "Bible Readings," and those who remember his directness, his knowledge of the Bible, his sense of the needs of his audiences will know what power lay in these simple studies of Bible truth.

The same adaptation of these suggestions to the needs of the situation will, of course, be made by the preacher or evangelist as are expected in connection with all the texts and subjects that have

been proposed. The topics are proposed more as examples of what may be done than as things to be done as they are suggested. But with the program of the meetings in mind as we have proposed it these and similar subjects seem to be suited to use.

Addresses for Men's Meetings

In selecting the subjects for the addresses we have kept in mind the particular problems of the religious life of the men of a community. We have had clearly before us the informal character of the meeting, and have aimed at the directness of style and address that are characteristic of the vigorous thinking of groups of men.

There has been no change in the message that we have been trying to give; the only modification has been in the close adaptation of the subjects and method of treatment to a particular group.

Make the applications of truth close; seek concrete and forceful illustrations; speak with directness and great frankness. The one characteristic of effective addresses to groups of men should be complete sincerity. No artifice is tolerable.

MEN'S MEETING, I

BEING A MAN IS A MAN'S JOB

"Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong" (1 Cor. 16:13).

The greatest task ever given to any man is simply

to live a manly life, to be a complete man. Our supreme business is the development of our own personal character so that it may please God and serve our generation in the highest possible way.

We have to Fight for Manhood. Character is not a gift; it is an achievement. It costs more to attain it than it does to secure any other good in life. The whole world is marked by struggle. It begins with the lowest forms of life and ends with the endeavour to attain a Christlike character. Therefore this is not an exception in the order of life. Our own motives are weak and unworthy; outward circumstances drag us down. Obstacles would force us to yield the fight; our friends sometimes lose faith in us. This is the fight before us.

Our Determination to Win is Half the Battle. The text is a command addressed to the will of the individual. It recognizes the fact that determination is a large factor in the fight. Therefore we are told that we must determine to win our battle for Christian character. The decision to press the fight to the end is the greatest single assurance of victory. Without it the fight is lost at the outset. Our decision must be positive and tenacious. We must hold to the decision to win by God's help in spite of every circumstance and failure that would divert or dishearten us.

Manly Action is a Warrant of Victory. Not only are we summoned to firm decision by the text, but we are encouraged to definite and manly action to achieve success. The problem must be worked at with specific and constant action. To will is not

enough; we must carry out the decision in a specific program of service. Duties must be assumed and responsibilities accepted. Hardships must be met. Surrender of that which we would like to enjoy must be often made. Ridicule must sometimes be experienced. Patience is also necessary. It is a man's fight and a man's achievement. This fact makes the challenge of Christ all the more attractive. We are not offered a primrose path and something for nothing. We are summoned to hard fighting.

MEN'S MEETING, II

CHRIST THE HELPER OF MEN

"For verily not to angels doth he give help, but he giveth help to the seed of Abraham" (Heb. 2: 16).

Note the tendency to remove Jesus from our real human world. We think of Christ in some far-off heaven. But Christ is not remote from life. He is in the midst of our daily, common life. Study the areas of our daily needs where Christ is present to help us.

In our Moral Struggle. We recall the fact that there is an inevitable and fierce struggle on for character. We cannot win this fight alone. It is the testimony of millions of men and women since the beginnings of Christian history that Christ does actually bring fresh resources to the soul in its struggle and turns the tide of battle in favour of goodness and truth in the conflict with sin. Through trust and prayer the energy arrives; our spent souls

may be given new courage and power. Christ is our helper when the hour of crisis comes.

In Determining the Meaning and Worth of Life. It is not easy to be sure either what the world means or what life is worth. In hours of dismay we sometimes question seriously whether the order of life is good or whether living is worth while. But Christ has solved this problem. His own life is the answer to the question. Our human life is the opportunity for God's love and wisdom to find its results achieved through human coöperation. This world is the place in which the Kingdom of God is to be realized. So, however long or short our life may be, it is good and glorious to live.

In our Fear of Failure and Death. Men always have lived under the grim foreboding lest somehow God's plans should be thwarted. Death is a forbidding experience at best. On both these points Christ brings us practical help. We feel sure that sometime God will bring His Kingdom into realization since the eternal life is assured through Christ. We need not fear death since we have seen that it is robbed of its terror in the case of Jesus. We know that death is an episode in the continuous life of the spirit and because Christ lives we shall live also.

MEN'S MEETING, III

THE FLAME OF NEW LIFE

"Stir up the gift of God that is in thee" (2 Tim. 1:6).

The figure in the Greek word is vivid and pictur-

esque. It means to fan and to kindle into flame living embers. So the text really reads: Kindle into flame the smouldering life of the soul.

The Flame of our Life often Burns out. Our early enthusiasms wear away and leave us; the freshness of our dreams often fades. The abrasion of daily work is hard on the finer texture of the spirit. Selfish ambitions invade our purposes and the nobler visions of former days wane. Unless we are constantly on the watch we see the flame dwindle and finally even the glow cease in the embers. We must stir and fan the coals and kindle the spark to flame.

The Spark of Life is still there. In spite of all the loss of our higher ideals, there still remain the glowing coals of aspiration and yearning in our souls. In our deepest and sincerest moments we know that we are the children of the Eternal. We are sure that we are built too large for earth. We cannot be wholly satisfied either with our highest human attainment or the best of our earthly successes. We want something more. We yearn for higher levels of life and our spirit goes out in a quest for God. All these are indications of the smouldering sparks of the new life. We must kindle them.

The Live Coals must be Fanned into Flame. How can this be done? We must get into touch with new truths that have power to inspire and strengthen the soul. We can find these in Christ. We must see the world in finer and holier aspects. This we can do when we look at it through the eyes of Christ.

We must discover new duties and get into touch with new comrades. These are furnished to us when we come into vital relations with Christ. Nothing causes our life to break into flame more quickly than to confront it with great opportunities for service. When we sense a big task for Christ we feel that there is something in us responding to it. Just this task Christ presents to us now. It is nothing less than the redemption of the whole world, including ourselves, from sin into a new life of love and joy and peace. That is the biggest program that ever was set before American men. We must meet it.

MEN'S MEETING, IV

WIND FOR SEED: WHIRLWINDS FOR HARVEST

"For they sow the wind, and they shall reap the whirlwind" (Hos. 8:7).

Note the principle, Whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap. The seed sown in the field and the harvest reaped from it are identical in kind. This is universal law. Study some of its applications:

Evil Seed. In this include some of the sinful purposes and actions that are characteristic of American men to-day.

Violent Passion. Surrender of our self-control and yielding to outbreaks of temper lead at last to fury and violence, with rash and profane speech. We must learn to control ourselves.

Coarse and Unclean Ideas, Language, Stories. Vulgar jests, stories with double meaning, dwelling

on unclean subjects finally and often quickly bring the habit of vicious thought and action. In the end whirlwinds of sensual emotion sweep over and overwhelm us.

Small Dishonesties. The temptation to indulge in small dishonesties, the result of which will accrue to our immediate advantage, crowd upon us. We are certain in our minds that we never shall be caught. But one deception demands another and still greater fraud; so before we know it we are hopelessly involved in ruin.

Doubt of God's Love and Goodness. We begin sometimes by yielding to the doubts that arise when we study modern science or attempt to explain all the experiences of religion. Slowly we give up the faith of a simple, childlike heart; prayer and church relationships are slowly abandoned. Finally we do not make Christ the chief factor in our environment. The whirlwinds of doubt and denial sweep over us.

Good Seed. The subject must not be left in this negative condition. It is equally true that whoever sows the good seed of self-control, purity, honour, reverence, faith, love will reap an abundant harvest, also of the same kind. The text is one of encouragement as well as of warning. The way to be happy and prosperous is to change the kind of seed we are sowing.

For Women's Meetings

During the course of the Mission there will be several occasions on which addresses must be given to meetings for women. In choosing the

subjects for these we have especially in mind those problems and experiences of the Christian life that are appropriate or peculiar to women. It is not difficult to determine at least some of these and to speak of them.

There are certain reactions that are especially pleasant in addressing groups of women. They are generally quite eager listeners and their response is often more apparent than in the case of men. Perhaps they do not think so deeply when they give themselves to a religious problem or subject; but they at least present the appearance of more general thoughtfulness than will often be experienced in speaking to men.

We have generally found that the opportunity for conversation following the meetings is readily given by women, either singly or in small groups. Women know how to state their difficulties clearly; they are quick to respond to a suggestion of spiritual direction.

The following subjects are suggestive of others that will quickly come to a preacher's mind and grow out of his experience in evangelistic preaching.

WOMEN'S MEETING, I

THE TREASURY OF A MOTHER'S HEART

"But Mary kept all these sayings, pondering them in her heart" (Luke 2: 19).

The great men probably soon forgot all about what had taken place; but Mary remembered and laid up

each reference and suggestion in the treasury of her heart.

The Sayings. They indicated wonderful things in store for the child. He was a helpless baby; but there were such great promises and prophecies wrapped up in Him that one hardly dared to dream of what would unfold in time. Every little life is a prophecy of great achievements. We must dare to believe great things for our children. When we expect much from them they tend to rise to the level of our ideals and desires.

The Memory. Selfishness soon forgets; but love always remembers. The tablets of memory are made sensitive and the images impressed upon them are fixed by affection. So love is tenacious. We must remember the good and try to forget the bad. In the end it is the kind and the right that remains in our minds. Try to give loving memories to others to keep of you. Try to find the good and the loving to keep in your memories of others.

The Pondering. Mary went over the details again and again. Each time some new beauty and suggestion flashed forth. That is the result of brooding on beautiful things. When life was full of hard work, Mary went back in her memory and lived over the blessed experiences of those wonderful days. She heard the music about which the shepherds had told her above all the monotony of her daily toil. It is a blessed thing to have a glorious memory and a great ideal to stand by us while we work. It lifts us above the monotony and the complaint of dreary days.

The Result. It was twofold. It gave Mary a new view of life and filled dull days with beauty. It set a song going in her soul. And it cast a glory around Jesus that made His life more wonderful in her eyes. It made her expect more of Him; and He inevitably rose to meet the expectation. We are lifted by the hopes and ambitions that others cherish for us. Even if He never defined the matter to Himself, Jesus knew that He was destined to a great character by His mother's ideals. He could not fail her. He did not

WOMEN'S MEETING, II

OUR UTMOST

"She hath done what she could" (Mark 14:8).

In the house of Simon of Bethany a woman anointed Jesus at the cost of her chief treasure. She did what she could for Christ. Have we done as much?

With our Money and Material. The precious nard was expensive; the woman had saved it for a long time. But she never hesitated; she gave it all to Christ. Are we ready to sacrifice our possessions for the Kingdom? Are we honest and accurate stewards of God's gifts?

With our Time. "Time is money." Every minute is valuable in our crowded days. Some are spendthrifts of their time; others, misers. We must give time every day to Christ. How much did we spend yesterday for Him?

With our Thoughts. The world needs clear and honest thinking. Christians must be leaders in

thinking out the problems of the day. We must also think about Christ and the meaning of His message for the whole of life. What mental contribution are we making to the Kingdom of God?

With our Love. The world is hungrier for love than it is for bread. We cannot command others to come to Christ. The Kingdom of God cannot be brought into being by violence. We must love men to Christ. Good will alone will make a new world. The Master has first claim on our loyalty and love. Are we giving these to Him?

With our Personal Influence. Every one possesses a certain power over his comrades which is sometimes called personal "magnetism." It is the ability to sway the lives of others to higher or lower levels. We ceaselessly and for the most part constantly influence each other. Are we devoting this wonderful power fully to Christ?

With our Prayer, Aspiration and Spiritual Energy. We are endowed with all these gifts by God. The world needs the uplifting power of these energies. Our comrades must have our prayer. We must aspire to higher levels ourselves and help others attain them. Our supreme gift to our generation is ourselves. Such a gift honours Christ. Are we devoting these highest powers to Him?

WOMEN'S MEETING, III

LEAKING CISTERNS

"For my people have committed two evils: they have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters, and

hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water" (Jer. 2:13).

The broken cisterns are a symbol of a human life that leaves out Christ; the spring of running water is the symbol of a life in which Christ is given the first place.

The Leaking Cisterns. These are the selfish ambitions, the lower purposes, the passing pleasures and talk with which we tend to fill our lives. We work hard for them. We "hew them out." Such a life costs labour. "It is hard work to be tough." Then the cisterns leak after we have worked hard to hew them out. It is a vivid figure of the way in which all the material side of life fails to satisfy the deepest needs of the soul. In the mad rush for pleasure we go on stimulating the jaded senses until at last there is no excitement quite keen enough. The whole effort fails. Our own self is not a big enough object on which to spend our lives. If we start out simply to be comfortable we quickly come to the place where nothing makes us quite comfortable. The cistern is leaking again. If we try to make money we are never quite satisfied with the pace; we want more.

The Fountain of Life. Over against this symbol we set the thought of God as the Giver of life. It is not something that we work for; it is something that is given to us. God does not work for wages; neither do we earn His bounty. Then the spring is constantly flowing. There is no end to the goodness of God. It is life-giving. We could not live without water. It is absolutely necessary to the

keeping up of life. God is necessary. The spirit fails without Him. We are trying to keep up life on all kinds of food and exercise; try Christ and the service of the Kingdom of God. It will not fail. This life is pure and beautiful, like the running spring. Stagnant waters grow putrid; running streams are fresh and fair. They bless all the land through which they flow. This also is a symbol of Christ and the service and character which He creates. Dig no longer on a leaking cistern; drink of the water of life.

WOMEN'S MEETING, IV

THE WATER JAR BY THE WELL CURB

"So the woman left her waterpot, and went away into the city" (John 4:28).

A woman came from the village to Jacob's well to fill her heavy jar with water and carry it home for her house work; but when she met Jesus, she gained such a vision of truth that she left her waterpot and ran to the village to share the good news with her people; she probably came back later and took up the old burden; but she carried her load in a new spirit.

The Waterpot, an old Burden. Woman's work is never done. There is no end to housekeeping. Day after day the woman carried the heavy jar. The song died from her lips and the colour faded from her cheeks. She felt no high joy to help her sustain the pressure of the load. She could not sing, Blessed be drudgery; for there was no up-

lifting spirit in her heart. Hard and unchanging work kills in time if there is no relief.

The Good News. At the well this woman found Christ. He was kind and firm and assuring. He met all the secret yearnings of her soul. He was just the kind of a Master that her spirit had craved through all the dreary years. He had told her the truth. He had been willing to be her Friend. She could do nothing less than hurry up to the town and tell every one that she had found the Christ. It was such a wonderful discovery! Now there was something to work for. Now there was a new life possible.

The Old Waterpot and the New Song. After a little time she took up her housekeeping as usual. Daily she went to the well and lifted the heavy bucket; daily she filled her jar and carried it up to her house. But it was not so heavy any more. She had found Someone who said that His burden was light. And so it proved. To be a Christian does not mean to be released from labour. It does not mean, necessarily, to have even an easier or a different job. But it means to have a new faith and courage with which to do the old work. Christ honours us most when He sets us to doing the familiar work in His spirit and joy. Just as a young mother can do work that she never dreamed possible when it is for her child; so we can take up services that seemed impossible when we do it for Christ, who has done so much for us. Christians sing while they work. Underneath them is the sustaining strength of Christ's mighty love and power.

Bible Talks

There is undoubtedly a better name for that which we have in mind. Mr. Moody used to call them "Bible Readings." That may be a better term. What we have in mind is not precisely Expository Sermons, for a sermon is more formal and is given generally as a part of an order of worship, which adds to it a certain stateliness. The address which we are describing is less formal. It may often be interrupted by question and answer. It is adapted to the simple assemblies that gather in an evangelistic Mission.

The great value in these addresses lies in the fact that they help bring the Bible back to the lives of the people. The Bible is our most praised and most neglected book. Christians are constantly told that they should read and study it; but, in spite of all the effort that is put into the Sunday Schools, the real study of the Bible is neglected in a shameful degree among Christian people.

The Bible is the most interesting book in the world. If it is read and studied honestly it yields such results in life and character as come from no other source. People love to hear it interpreted. When they are guided in the right way they will give time to it and will enrich their experience from it.

One fruitful method in evangelistic preaching is to read and comment upon the Bible in public meetings in such a way that the Bible will appear in its

true light as a principal factor in the development of the Christian life. It is not only necessary to do this in order that the truths in the Bible may be clarified and pressed upon the attention of the people, but also in order to show by the addresses how the Bible may be interpreted and used. The method of the talks is quite as important as their substance.

In giving such talks it is necessary to be pictorial, graphic and vivid in style. The imagination must be used. Let the preacher dwell upon the scene until it is so clear in his mind that he sees every person moving through the scene and catches every detail plainly. Use pictures and travels and descriptions of all kinds to make the events in the Bible narratives actual and moving. Do not be afraid of the dramatic. The Bible is preëminently a dramatic book. Romance is in it, and tragedy and comedy. The characters are brilliant with human interest and value. Get them out of the past and into the living present by the use of your imagination. Then represent them with loving pictorial earnestness.

BIBLE TALK, I

RELIGION IN ACTION

This is an interpretation of Micah 6, especially of verse 8: "He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth Jehovah require of thee, but

to do justly, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with thy God?"

Huxley said concerning the ideal of religion contained in this chapter: "A perfect ideal of religion! A conception of religion which appears to me as wonderful an inspiration of genius as the art of Phidias or the science of Aristotle."

The Ceremonial Conception of Religion and its Failure. This does not mean that there is no place in religion for the ceremony and the sacrament. There is a great and essential part for them to perform in the expression of religion. But they are not able alone to give utterance to the deepest impulses of religion. They can do their part; but not all. The danger is that the ceremonies will become simply an end in themselves and therefore become a menace to religion instead of a help. "To say our prayers is not to pray." The form must be constantly vitalized by the spirit or it is worse than useless.

The Vital Conception of Religion and its Satisfaction. Religion must come into practical and social expression. It must add social action to ceremonial expression. It must take the beautiful form and fill it with beneficent service.

Christianity consists in doing justice. Nothing can take the place of righteous living. The performance of ceremonies is not a substitute for the most rigid justice. The ritual is justified by the kind of life it produces. It is folly to repeat a creed in public worship declaring that we believe in God the Father Almighty if we go out and treat our

fellow men as if there were no God. At that moment we have become practical atheists.

Christianity consists in a loving life. To love kindness means to take hold practically and do something to set the hatreds and the sufferings of the world right. Misery is so abundant that all the energies of the Christian people are called for to set them right. Especially is this true as we set about to repair the damage of war.

Christianity consists in a reverent relation of loyalty to God. To walk humbly does not mean to cringe and fear; it means to bear ourselves nobly and to share the very nature and joy of God. It is the life of fellowship and power.

BIBLE TALK, II

A SONG OF GOOD COURAGE

This is a study of Psalms 42 and 43 for the particular purpose of seeing the way in which the discouraged soul wins its victory over despair through its faith in God. We first study the structure of the poem. It consists of three stanzas each followed by a chorus. Each stanza is a monologue. The lower or disheartened soul speaks in the monologue. The higher or encouraging soul tries to bring help and hope to the disheartened in the chorus. There is a most interesting parallel in Tennyson's *The Two Voices*.

Stanza 1. This shows the soul in the very depths of depression. Tears are its food. The taunts of its enemies ring in the gloomy spirit's ears. Even the memory of happier days and former blessed ex-

periences becomes an instrument of torture. Yet it is a faint suggestion of comfort and peace, dimly heard among the disheartening voices.

Chorus 1. The nobler soul commands the depressed soul to hope in God, affirming that it surely will finally triumph through its resolute faith. This is a positive, glad and most confident note of cheer.

Stanza 2. In this stanza the two moods of hope and fear are nearly balanced. Despair has held the field almost wholly in stanza 1. Now the balance is gradually shifting. Neither quite wins over the other; but hope has gained so much that it begins to be sure that it will win in the end. There is no effort to deny the despair; it is like the waterfalls and the engulfing billows. Yet the love of God is greater than all these. God is the rock on which the soul rests, even if it seems for the moment as if he had failed.

Chorus 2. Once more the braver soul affirms the wisdom and love of God and appeals for the dominion of courage.

Stanza 3. We now hear the song of good courage fully sung. Hope has conquered fear. It rings like a great bell, proclaiming the victory. God is the giver of strength. The confident soul will go singing back to the old experience that was once so beautiful. Hope has insisted upon the reality of the divine love and wisdom and so has conquered. There will be no more despair. God is in His heaven and the world cannot be lost in gloom.

Chorus 3. Finally God is acclaimed again as one who will save those who keep faith in Him.

BIBLE TALK, III

THE VISION AND MISSION OF LIFE

This is a study of Isaiah 6. It was an experience from the life of a young man. The hour when one sees the vision of life and hears the call to service is a supreme experience. We shall seek to give modern meaning to this old record.

I. *A Young Man's Vision of God.* It can be described only dimly; but it was vivid and mighty as it came to him.

A. *In a Time of Upheaval and Crisis.* The death of an Oriental despot was a tremendous event. Young Isaiah saw the ostentatious funeral; he heard all the expressions of sorrow and fear; but he saw *also* the Lord.

B. *The Vision of Holiness.* It was a vision of splendour and majesty; also a vision of power. Supremely, a vision of holiness, perfection, complete moral beauty. This was the real grandeur that abased while it lifted the young man.

C. *The Resultant Vision of Sin.* Out of the vision of God's holiness grew the inevitable conviction of human sin. We never know how weak or wicked we are until we see ourselves in the light of God's holy strength. Then we are driven to penitence and the plea for pardon.

2. *A Young Man's Cleansing, Call and Consecration.*

A. *The Cleansing Fire.* It stands for the purgation of life. Evil must be stripped away in order that the mission of life may be carried out. We

cannot do God's will when we are crippled by sin. Only the pure in heart see God.

B. *The Call*. It is personal—"whom," "I," "us." It is urgent. It is specific—"go." There is no guesswork about either the need or the work. They are on every side.

C. *The Answer*. It was immediate. No time was spent in debate. It was definite and positive. It was cheerful; there was no rebellion or complaint.

3. *A Man's Report of his Life Work*. The apparent problem in the passage is explained by understanding that here the mature Isaiah writes the result of his later experience as if it were a specific item in his call.

A. *Truth makes Slow Headway*. Every champion and defender of truth finds this out. We cannot hasten the coming of the Kingdom of God by rash means or by violence.

B. *God's Final Judgments are Inexorable*. There is no escape from the divine program. It can be hindered, not stalled.

C. *The Hope in the Remnant*. Generally it is a minority that sees the divine vision and stands true. But one with God is a majority.

BIBLE TALK, IV

FOLLOWING THE IDEAL

Study Phil' ians 3. This is a tenderly personal chapter from the heart of St. Paul. It is the report of his experience as a Christian, given largely

in the terms of explanation. We may agree or disagree with his interpretation; but we must feel the genuineness of his report of his experience.

The Past (vs. 1-6). The invitation to happiness is an introduction to what he means to say in the chapter. The warning to avoid enemies leads him to review his own life. There were abundant grounds for his boasting: his Hebrew lineage; a Pharisee; zealous to the point of persecuting those who differed from him; so far as moral integrity was concerned, blameless before the law. That was a record of which one might justly be proud.

The Present (vs. 7-11). A wholly new idea of life has become his. Instead of trusting to the law and obedience to it in order to achieve righteousness, he now trusts Christ. A new standing is given to him before God. He becomes righteous, not because he has achieved a character by obedience to law, but because he has been granted a new relationship to God through his faith in Christ. It is all so different that it cannot be described in any other way than a new life or a new creation. Christ has laid hold on him and he has laid hold on Christ. In that mutual grasp his soul wins a new life.

The Future (vs. 12-21). It is like a foot-race in the great stadium; there is a goal ahead, toward which the runner presses with every nerve tense. He lets nothing divert him from that one objective, on which he has fixed his gaze. His citizenship is not merely on earth; it is also in heaven. He is living in two worlds at a time, in one of which he keeps up his strenuous pace and in the other of

which dwell his hopes and from which he looks for the final fulfilment of his great desires. He dares to make this attitude of such moment that he can commend it to others as one to follow. To him the final achievement is safe and sure because he has committed himself to Christ in such a complete abandonment of devotion that he trusts Him fully to bring the desire of his heart to pass.

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